National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

POWER, IDEOLOGY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE *CONTRA*/REVOLUTION.

BY

MALINDA SHARON SMITH ©

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1993.

National Library of Canada

Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-88225-5

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: **Malinda Sharon Smith**

TITLE OF THESIS: **Power, Ideology and the Construction of the** *Contra*/revolution

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: Fall, 1993

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

Malinda S. Smith

Malinda S. Smith
No. 21 Yellow Elder Gardens
Post Office Box N-862
Nassau, New Providence
Bahamas.

31 August, 1993.
DATE

A WOMAN SPEAKS

Moon marked and touched by sun
my magic is unwritten
but when the sea turns back
it will leave my shape behind.
I seek no favor
untouched by blood
unrelenting as the curse of love
permanent as my errors
or my pride
I do not mix
love with pity
nor hate with scorn
and if you would know me
look into the entrails of Uranus
where the restless oceans pound.

I do not dwell
within my birth nor my divinities
who am ageless and half-grown
and still seeking
my sisters
witches in Dahomey
wear me inside their coiled cloths
as our mothers did
mourning.

I have been woman
for a long time
beware my smile
I am treacherous with old magic
and the noon's new fury
with all your wide futures
promised
I am
woman
and not white.

Audre Lorde
The Black Unicorn (1978).

POWER, IDEOLOGY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE *CONTRA*/REVOLUTION

VOLUME I

BY

MALINDA SHARON SMITH

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled POWER, IDEOLOGY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE *CONTRA*/REVOLUTION submitted by MALINDA SHARON SMITH in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

Fred Judson
Prof. C. Fred Judson

Tom Pocklington
Prof. Tom Pocklington

Prof. Linda Trimble

David K. Johnson
Prof. David Johnson

Susan L. Smith
Prof. Susan Smith

Fred Judson for D. Close
Prof. David Close

17 August, 1993.
Date

A DEDICATION

To the great women
who have been,
and who are, a gift to my life:
to my late grandmothers, ELLEN HUTCHINSON and
MARGARET WRIGHT, whose sweet ancient wisdom guided
me during my formative years;
to my courageous mother, INEZ SMITH,
whose indomitable strength and perseverance
in the face of life's greatest inhumanities
have been more empowering influences
than perhaps she ever imagined;
to my beloved sisters,
SHIRLEY, MARGARET, YVONNE AND GWENDOLYN,
whose steadfast pursuits of diverse talents and
dreams have provided me immeasurable solidarity
during my most difficult moments; and to
my best friend, SHEILA DUNPHY,
for your integrity and
invaluable support.

ABSTRACT

Revolutions and their negations, counterrevolutions, are made. This study is a philosophical enquiry into ideology, power and various discourses in the making and masking, that is ma(s)king, of the Nicaraguan *Contra*/revolution. It explicates the simultaneous process wherein the making of the Nicaraguan Revolution and the *Contra*/revolution were masked through both the calculated and unconscious deployment of various modalities of ideology, including legitimation, dissimulation, fragmentation and reification. It exposes the overlap of external and internal efforts first to prevent the making of the Nicaraguan Revolution, and then to construct the *Contra*/revolution. As such, there never was a moment during the experience of the Revolution when its subversion, the *Contra*/revolution, also was not experienced.

First, this study discusses the conceptual and ethico-practical problems encountered by students of politics engaged in theorizing from the classical period to the advent of postmodernism. Second, it analyzes the history of the United States' global imperialism and its neocolonial relations with Nicaragua. Third, it explores the antagonistic relations between the Administrations of James Carter and Ronald Reagan and the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* which resulted in the former creating the armed forces known as the *Contras*. Fourth, it illumes the anti-Semitic and racist construction of Jewish and indigenous identities, respectively, through the deployment of stereotypes and "planned

hegemony."

Finally, this study shifts to the theorizing of liberation by first deconstructing the making of European hegemony over Americas' indigenous peoples and Africans of the slave diaspora and, then, reconstructing the complex and divergent political histories of Nicaragua's Sumu, Rama and Miskito "Indians," Garífunas or Black Caribs, Creoles and Mestizos. Their struggles for *klauna iwanka* (autonomy) made an indigenous revolution within the revolution which was sometimes obscured by the *Contra* discourse. The body of this text is concerned with the articulation and interrogation of various historical and social relations as well as discourses which ma(s)ked the *Contra*/revolution and produced both intended and unintended consequences.

PREFACE

My greatest hope is that this study does justice to the subjects who inspired it: the *compañeras* and *compañeros* who implored *internationalistas* visiting Nicaragua to tell the truth(s) of their stories abroad. They thought knowledge of such stories would empower Northamericans and their governments to stop the wars which unconscionably decimated their homeland and bonded the future possibilities of their children. For at least two reasons, it can be hoped that this study, which interrogates various conceptions of power, ideology and the workings of discourse in ma(s)king historic events like counterrevolutions, addresses their major concerns, as much as my own. First, because I believe that Nicaraguans, no less than Northamericans, deserve the right to self-determination; they deserve a humane condition which is conducive to the cultivation of their excellences. Second, as I reflect upon Talal Asad's writings, I cannot ignore a truth of this study, and truly much cross-cultural studies: they are inextricably linked to an end which may or may not encompass the concerns of those being studied.

This project is tied to my receiving a Ph.D and it causes me to reflect upon the second formulation of Kant's Categorical Imperative; treat people as an end, as *mündige*, never as a means. I wonder what implications this might have for those of us who are students of international politics and, hence, of relations between apparently different peoples. What might it require of those who desire not to simply repeat or become implicated in longstanding and questionable representations, and/or who desire to record other than what Plato in the Phaedrus referred to as "rememoration" and appearances? I wonder whether the very act of writing rememorations and experiences of history, no matter how unorthodox, contributes to one of the fundamental problems of political life: the ignorance of history or the decline in the power of *anamnesis* (or the act of "unforgetting"). That is, does writing displace memory or is it really a paradox: historical memory is partly contingent upon archives, yet the latter creates the context for forgetting and, hence, for replicating errors of the past? The approach to studying international politics reflected in this study is partly indicative of my thinking on why certain events like counterrevolutions can occur first as tragedy and thereafter are repeated as farce: we never learned; we do not remember; we forget; we study appearances; we assume we already know; we do not want to know; we do not understand.

This study seeks to give proper due to those courageous souls who enriched my life while I stayed in Nicaragua, the memories of whom nourished me when I came close to faltering. It is my fervent hope that the complexities and multilayered texture of the individual and collective histories, experiences and pursuits for liberation by Nicaraguans, have been treated with honesty and fairness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the support, encouragement and insightful suggestions of a number of people. Foremost, my deepest love, respect and thanks to my family: to my parents, Inez and Elvin Smith, Sr., for encouraging me to find and pursue my talents; to my sisters Yvonne and Margaret for their example and unswerving faith in my abilities; to Carl, Alvin, Roderick and Gwendolyn for sustaining morale along the way. I am grateful to my "Canadian family," to Marlene and Gerald Dubois and especially to Sheila Dunphy for being so extraordinarily supportive.

The solidarity of fellow travellers has been a healthy corrective to the roller coaster experience which sometimes characterize graduate work (in alphabetical order): thanks to Mike Bradley, Tom Enders, Robin Hunter, Terry Kading, Gurcan Kocan, Chaldeans Mensah, Edward Osei-Kwado, Smita Swarup and Xu Yi-chong. A number of faculty and staff also gave generously of their time and knowledge: Audrey Bell-Hiller, Alice Lau, Kim Nicholson, Pam Ouimet, and especially Jack Masson. Additionally, I am indebted to D.J.C. Carmichael and Heidi Studer for numerous insightful discussions on perennial questions of political philosophy. Further, I thank Cornelia Heinen for her translation of German missionary reports on the Atlantic Coast. A heartfelt thanks to my "soul sisters": Biz Huiras, Janet Lawing, Sue Muloin, Jade Bolt, Pat Rasmussen, Jaya Chauhan, Karin Goldberg and Joanna Dunbar. Moreover, special thanks are due to two

wonderful women: Maryon McClary and Lou P. Cole for quietly enduring their spouses re-reading of multiple drafts over the years.

To my supervisory committee, I am most grateful: to David Johnson and Susan Smith for feedback on various drafts. Thanks to Linda Trimble for her suggestions and whose practice of being an academic I admire. I am deeply indebted to two exemplary persons: my respect for the most excellent mind of Tom Pocklington is enormous and I thank him for always challenging me to be better. I am eternally indebted to my teacher, advisor and cherished friend, Fred Judson, for his knowledge, integrity and intellectual guidance. Thank you Fred for your reflective walks, kind ear, constructive advice and perceptive insights: you are an example unrivalled in academe.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. **Chapter I: Theorizing Classical to Post/Modern Inter/National Politics** 2
I.1. Introduction 2
I.2 On Deconstruction: From Marx to Derrida 4
I.3 On Postmodernism: Lyotard, Baudrillard, de Man 12
I.4 Nietzsche, Interpretation and History 25
I.5 Power and Politics 37
I.6 Power and Ideology 57
I.7 History, Power and Ideology/Knowledge 64
I.8 Ideology and Propaganda 71
I.9 Just Wars and Intervention 78

II. **Chapter II: Imperialism and Counter-Revolutions: The United States in a Funhouse Mirror** 94
II.1 Introduction 94
II.2 Contending Ideologies and Doctrinaire Interventions.. 100
II.3 The Inter/national Stage and Carter's Foreign Policy. 138
II.4 Conservatives: Old, New and Postmodern 156

III. **Chapter III: The Ma(s)king of the Nicaraguan Revolution: Carter, Somoza and the** ***Sandinistas*** 170
III.1 Introduction 170
III.2 Carter's *Contra*/dictions 178
III.3 The Making of a *Sandinista* Revolution 182
III.4 Seeds of the *Contra*/revolution 206
III.5 Reagan's Early anti-*Sandinista* Position 213
III.6 Manufacturing Truth and Reality 216
III.7 Conclusion 227

IV. **Chapter IV: Ideology and** *Contra*/dictions: Reagan, the *Sandinistas* and the *Contras* 232
IV.1 Introduction 232
IV.2 The Reagan Doctrine and Ideological Warfare 237
IV.3 The Reagan Doctrine and Counterrevolutions 254
IV.4 "Foundation Stones" of the *Contra*/revolution 261
IV.5 Reagan, the Media and the *Contras* 278
IV.6 A Retrospective 343

V. Chapter V: Ideology, Discourse and the Construction of Ethnic and Religious Identities...................... 348
V.1 Introduction.. 349
V.2 Ideologies, Discourse and Identities................. 359
V.3 Contextualizing International Identity Politics...... 368
V.4 De/constructing the Miskito "Genocide"............... 380
V.5 Precursor to Forced Relocation....................... 389
V.6 Marxist Indoctrination?.............................. 402
V.7 Disinformation and Religious Identities.............. 408
V.8 Contextualizing International Jewish Experiences..... 420
V.9 Another Holocaust, Anti-Semitism or Hoax?............ 425
V.10 Conclusions... 439

VI. Chapter VI: Theorizing Liberation: History, Colonial Discourse, Indigenous and African Identities......... 444
VI.1 Introduction.. 445
VI.2 Interpreting and Re/writing: Post/Colonial History... 447
VI.3 From Victorian to Postcolonial Ethnohistory.......... 454
VI.4 Conceptual Framework: Marx, Freud, Marcuse, Gramsci.. 465
VI.5 The Construction of European Hegemony................ 488
VI.6 Either/Or Naming: Civilization and Cannibalism....... 495
VI.7 Myths or Paradigms?: Discovery and Exchange/Encounter 512

VII. *Trabil Nani*: Nicargua's Atlantic Coast from Conquest to *Klauna iwanka*.................................... 523
VII.1 Introduction....................................... 524
VII.2 *Trabil Nani*...................................... 527
VII.3 Decolonization, Neocolonialism..................... 539
VII.4 Ethnohistory, Identities and the Roots of Conflict... 545
VII.5 Sumu Experiences................................... 550
VII.6 Rama Experiences................................... 553
VII.7 Miskito Experiences................................ 555
VII.8 Creoles or Criollos Experiences.................... 562
VII.9 Experiences of Garífunas/Black Caribs............... 565
VII.10 The Mestizo Experiences........................... 569
VII.11 Roots of *Klauna iwanka* or Autonomy............... 571
VII.12 From Reincorporation to Revolution................ 596
VII.13 Ethnic Militancy: Revolution in the Revolution..... 608
VII.14 February 1990 Elections........................... 616

VIII. Chapter VIII: "Real" and "Imagined" Battlefield(s)... 622

Bibliography.. 643

LIST OF TABLES

Table I Official Third Party Solicitations.......... 334

Table II Prior Occupations of Commanders of FDN, Task Forces or Equivalent Commands................. 337

Table III U.S. Official Aid to the *Contras*, 1981-1990.. 344

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure I Military Command Structure: FDN (1985)..... 305

Figure II United Nicarguan Opposition (UNO)......... 336

Figure III Contra High Command: 1986................ 340

Figure IV Miskito Reserve Municipal Constitution (1861).. 580

When someone is honestly 55 % right, that's very good and there's no use wrangling. And if someone is 60 % right, it's wonderful, it's great luck, and let him thank God. But what's to be said about 75 % right? Wise people say this is suspicious. Well, and what about 100% right? Whoever says he's 100 % right is a fanatic, a thug, and the worst kind of rascal.

An Old Jew of Galicia
in Czeslaw Milosz' Captive Mind

Chapter I

Theorizing Classical to Post/Modern Inter/National Politics

The problem of descending from the world of thoughts to the actual world is turned into the problem of descending from language into life.
Marx and Engels
The German Ideology (1845-1846).

The nationalist not only does not disapprove of atrocities committed by his own side, but he has a remarkable capacity for not even hearing about them.
George Orwell
"Notes on Nationalism" (1945).

I.1. Introduction

This is a political-philosophic enquiry in the general sense of the meaning of philosophy: the systematic study of epistemology, ontology, ethics, aesthetics and logic. This study is particularly concerned with illuminating the ways in which ideology operated to sustain various relations of power as domination during the Nicaraguan *Contra*/revolution. By domination I mean not simply relations characterized by one agent exercising "power over" another. Rather, domination here connotes the "systematically asymmetrical" relations whereby "particular agents or groups [or social formations] are endowed with power in a way which excludes, and to some significant degree remains inaccessible to, other agents or groups."[1] It will be shown that these relations of exclusion are often maintained irrespective of the (indefensible) basis upon which they initially were constructed. Before traversing what might at times seem like a labyrinth, I want to proffer a brief layout of the body of this chapter as a guide to my movements. From this general overview, I move into an exploration of the subject matter.

In this introductory chapter, I outline and critically analyze the political and philosophical concepts and material developments which will inform the nature of this study. In particular, it illuminates the problems of theorizing about international politics in light of classical and modern assumptions and the contemporary methodological developments which have accompanied postmodernism. There are two parts. The first part is concerned with articulating the various theoretical developments and their relevance for this study as well as any contemporary study of a political-philosophical nature. In sections two to four I discuss deconstructionism, postmodernism and the impact of the latter on interpretations in political-history. In the process I comment upon the role and responsibilities of the student of international politics in representing certain events, and social and material relations. From this, the analysis shifts to a more specific deconstruction of the major theoretical concepts in international politics: power, ideology, history, knowledge, propaganda and justice. These concepts will be critically analyzed while keeping in mind what they might mean for this study of the Nicaraguan *Contra*/revolution.

---

[1] John B. Thompson, "Language and ideology: a framework for analysis," The Sociological Review, 35, 3 (August, 1987), 519-521.

I.2. On Deconstruction: From Marx to Derrida

The core of this thesis will be concerned with re/constructing and deconstructing the fundamental ideas and ideologies at war during the *Contra*/revolution. Deconstruction in this context means to analyze critically and/or destroy. While deconstruction is sometimes used as a synonym for destruction, it is etymologically closer to the word "analysis" or "to undo" critically and carefully as opposed to arbitrarily or accidentally.[2] In this critical sense, deconstruction has an historical affinity with Descartes' "methodological doubt,"[3] and, in particular, Karl Marx's call for "a radical critique of everything existing."[4] Marx's observations and insights might have been written about today when, in a letter to Arnold Ruge in September 1843, he lamented the supreme "reign of stupidity" and the need for gatherings of "really thinking and independent minds."[5] In arguing for a ruthless criticism, he argued that the latter would "not be afraid of its own conclusions" and further, would not fear "conflicts with the powers that be."[6] Ironically, it is doubtful that even Marx could have conceived of the dominance of the "powers that be" and the ability in mass media societies to manufacture consent and suppress dissent without ever having recourse to physical violence. However, it is doubtful that Marx could have imagined how feminists would interrogate his own "independence" and "thinking" which predominantly focused on class as opposed to, for example, its relation to other social categories such as gender.[7] Similarly, Latin Americanists and postcolonial scholars have challenged his European ethnocentrism and inability to appreciate ethnic and cultural difference.[8] In effect, the matrix of critiques are multiple and shift with a dizzying frequency as subject(s) positionality changes. This is not to suggest that this relentless criticism is "new" or more self-conscious than the past.

---

[2] Barbara Johnson, The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 4-5.

[3] Descartes, Discourse on the Method, trans. L.J. Lafleur (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1951).

[4] Marx's Letter to Arnold Ruge, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing" (September 1843), trans. Ronald Rogowski in The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd edn., ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978), 13.

---

[5] Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, 12.

[6] Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader, 13.

[7] Linda Nicholson, "Feminism and Marx" in Feminism as Critique, eds., Seyla Benhabib & Drucilla Cornell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 16-30; and Catherine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory" in Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology, eds. Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Barbara C. Gelpi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 1-30.

[8] See, for e.g., "Marx and Engels on Latin America" (64-68) and Emilio Frugoni, "Socialism Is More than Marxism" (83-85) in Marxism in Latin America, ed. Luis E. Aguilar (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968).

Rather, what is different about this period is that contemporary critiques are reflective of the simultaneous existence of multiple subject voices into political discourses. And, perhaps, this fact also adds a further distinctiveness to the present moment in human history.

Although some postmodern deployers of the practice do not concede it, there is an historical affinity/continuity of deconstruction with classical and modern political cynicism,[9] the Socratic dialogue, Hegel and Marx's development of dialectics and some anarchists' articulations *contra* the state, government and other forms of centralized and coercive powers.[10] The idea of consciously unravelling and even destroying ideas and ideologies is not new and certainly not revolutionary. Every "age" has sought to posit itself *contra* the past and/or in anticipation of the future, sometimes operating on the uncritical assumption that there is a past/future that is coherent and decipherable.

By way of a caveat, I should state that while this work incorporates deconstruction as a methodology, it will be very clear why it is not postmodern per se. First, deconstruction is often traced to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Its contemporary manifestation was made popular by Jacques Derrida, especially his unrelenting interrogation of language and the interpretation of texts.[11] According to Derrida, writing is inevitably subjected to the vagaries of interpretation, meaning it "is incessantly deferred, put off, or delayed."[12] Some deconstructionists have taken this to mean that no writing has an absolute or authoritative meaning and, further, that all writing is indeterminate because words have no reference outside the texts, themselves. There is a nihilism of reference. However, Christopher Norris argued that this extension of deconstruction to nihilism should not be attributed to Derrida, although some of his work appears to invite such nihilism.[13] This demarcation will be explained later. Further, deconstructionists argue that the claims to determinate meaning, to cognitive "value," are but illusions, vestiges of logocentrism or "metaphysical presence." This logocentric Western tradition was thought to be "burdened" by metaphysics and to give priority to, for example, logic over rhetoric, science over art, the literal over the figurative; along with accepting the illusions of authoritative distinctions between fact and fiction, truth and falsehood.[14] The "logical," or end result, is an affirmation of indeterminancy and a rejection of absolute concepts. Deconstruction as a methodology is mobilized and deployed in order to illume and to undermine absolute concepts, to liberate them from metaphysical presence. Some analysts attribute all of these developments and views to Derrida. However, here it might be useful to make some controversial distinctions between deconstruction and postmodernism.

---

[9] Thrasymachus in The Republic of Plato, trans. Francis Cornford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945), III; Lenin, "State and Revolution," in J. Somerville and R. Santoni, eds., Social and Political Philosophy (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday [Anchor Books], 1966).

[10] Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience," in B. Atkinson, ed., Walden and Other Writings of Henry David Thoreau (New York: Random House: Modern Library, 1937); Emma Goldman, Anarchism and Other Essays (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, [1911] 1970); Robert Paul Wolff, In Defense of Anarchism (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

---

[11] **Michael C. Milam, "The Misuse of Nietzsche in Literary Theory," Philosophy and Literature 16 (1992), 320.**

[12] **Milam, "The Misuse of Nietzsche," 320.**

[13] **Norris, "Deconstruction** *Versus* Postmodernism," Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals and the Gulf War (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts, 1990), 32; and Norris, Deconstruction: theory and practice, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 1991).

Initially, Derrida sought to address some of these claims as they related to his own perspective. Derrida claimed that it was not part of his efforts to "assimilate the different regimes of fiction, not that I consider laws, constitutions, the declaration of the rights of man, grammar, or the penal code to be the same as novels."[15] In effect, this was not an a priori assumption. Further, he continued, what he did want was "to recall that they are not 'natural realities', and that they depend on the same structural power that allows novelesque fictions or mendacious inventions and the like to take place."[16] Moreover, Norris has proffered a highly contested position which suggested that, in contrast to postmodernists like Richard Rorty, Stanley Fish and Jean-Francois Lyotard, Derrida does not accept "that deconstruction is a discourse that celebrates the infinitized 'freeplay' of a writing cut off from all the irksome constraints of truth, reference or valid deconstructive argument."[17] In fact, Norris situated Derrida's writing in the tradition of Immanuel Kant and contemporary analytic philosophy.[18]

---

[14] **Norris,** **Uncritical Theory, 36; Maudemarie Clark, "Deconstructing** *The Birth of Tragedy,*" International Studies in Philosophy 19 (1987), 71.

[15] **Derrida, Limited Inc, 2nd edn. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University, 1989), 134.**

[16] **Derrida, Limited Inc, 134.**

This view of Derrida's Enlightenment affinities is, at least, shared by Rorty who argued that the problematic side of Derrida was his reliance on Kantian (or "constructive") conceptions of truth, argumentative rigour, validity and the like.[19] The side of Derrida preferred was the one which appeared to favour allusions, fantasy, jokes, parodies and pseudo-philosophical arguments. Again, in contrast, Derrida in Limited Inc argued that deconstruction illuminated the possibilities of "rules of competence, criteria of discussion and of consensus, good faith, lucidity, rigour, criticism, and pedagogy."[20] Additionally, in counteracting some of the mis/uses of his writings (ironically), Derrida argued that "the value of truth (and all those values associated with it) is never contested or destroyed in my writing, but only reinscribed in more powerful, larger, more stratified contexts."[21] Furthermore, Derrida conceived of his enterprise as part of the enlightened tradition wherein ethical reciprocal exchanges occurred; these exchanges invited, not precluded, interrogating the status of truths which were ostensibly self-validating, absolute and transcendent.[22] Or, as Derrida himself articulated, in the process of examining a particular "ethicity inscribed in language -- and this ethicity is a metaphysics (there is nothing pejorative in defining it as such) -- they reproduce, under the guise of describing it in its ideal purity, the given ethical condition of a *given* ethics."[23] Moreover, in that same process, other, no less essential conditions to ethics, are "excluded, ignored, relegated to the margins."[24] Thus, even while advocating the philosophic necessity of deconstruction, of questioning to their very core the foundations of modernity and enlightenment concepts and values, Derrida attempted to preserve the conception of "dialogue" or reciprocal exchange. On this reading, his is an effort which sought to pose deconstructive questions to all "philosophemes" and, in the process, to posit "another language and other thoughts...This language and these thoughts, which are also new responsibilities, arouse in me a respect which, whatever the cost, I neither can nor will compromise."[25]

---

[17] Norris, Uncritical Theory, 32.

[18] Christopher Norris, Derrida (London: Fontana, 1987).

[19] Rorty, "Deconstruction and Circumvention," Critical Inquiry XI (1987), 1-23.

[20] Derrida, Limited Inc, 146.

---

[21] Derrida in his "Afterword: toward an ethic of discussion," Limited Inc, 146.

[22] Norris, Uncritical Theory, 35.

[23] Derrida, Limited Inc, 122.

[24] Derrida, Limited Inc, 122.

For Derrida, deconstruction meant "putting radically into question" the notion "that there *are* and that there *should* be truth, reference, and stable contexts of interpretation."[26] In asserting the contestability of truth, reference and immutable contexts, he rightly challenged dogmas and absolutes which only a god could guarantee. Hence, this view of deconstruction affirmed the Enlightenment need for a continuous condition of critical inquiry, of the need to question and to defend what too readily passes as "givens" or as "self-evident" and ostensibly uncontestable truths.

Partly as a consequence of deconstruction-as-destruction, the present conjuncture in human history (accepting there is such a thing), is characterized, and consciously experienced, as one of extraordinary uncertainty, undecidability and even fatalism. It is a moment in which many ancient and modern Enlightenment constructs are under increasing scrutiny, critique and destruction. In the fields of political-economic studies, these times are variously named by the prefix "post": post-industrial, post-materialist, poststructuralist, postmodern and postcolonial.[27] There is also the more dubious claim of a post-ideological period.[28] What these characterizations suggest is the fact of existence (metaphorically) poised on the boundaries of one period, with the expectation of an impending movement into another. The idea of "post" heralds a diversity of paradoxical and even contradictory movements. Given my interpretation of Derrida's writing, and of deconstruction, I now turn to a more specific articulation of postmodernism. First, I briefly outline what postmodernism is and, second, I look more specifically at the various positions and the problems they pose, inadvertently, but inevitably, for any form of collective liberation.

---

[25] Derrida, Limited Inc, 153.

[26] Derrida, Limited Inc, 150.

[27] Linda Hutcheon, The Politics of Postmodernism (New York: Routledge, 1989); Bryan D. Palmer, Descent into Discourse: The

I.3. On Postmodernism: Lyotard, Baudrillard, de Man

In *Political Theory and Postmodernism*, Stephen K. White suggested that postmodernists generally adhere to four "theses" (if this is not too logocentric).[29] In examining these positions, it might be useful to keep in mind that these are general extrapolations; all positions might not be equally shared. First, they generally accept

---

Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

[28] See for e.g., Daniel Bell, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books [1973] 1976); also his *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (New York: The Free Press [1960] 1962).

[29] White, *Political Theory and Postmodernism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 7.

Lyotard's extreme cognitive scepticism toward all metanarratives, one which goes well beyond Derrida's ethical conception of deconstruction. Second, there is a general acceptance of the approach taken by Jean Baudrillard, namely the unrelenting deconstruction/destruction of public space(s), especially media. Third, there is an embrace of Michel Foucault's articulation of the process of "normalization." Finally, there is a "total" rejection of "totalizing" programs which purport to be capable of liberation from want, despair, nihilism. In reflecting upon these, White considered the tensions in alternative courses of action resulting from the various postmodern positions.

White explored two possibilities for postmodernists to act responsibly, especially to "otherness," in such an unsettling world. First, postmodernists could adopt Heidegger's politics of abstinence (which even he ignored in his flirtations with the Nazis), the purpose of which was to illustrate the end result of subordinating human conduct to "teleocratic reason."[30] A politics of abstinence was, in practice, a politics of sacrifice, of perpetual withholding. It invariably conflictd with the desire to affirm constructive acts toward liberation. In order not to act irresponsibly to otherness, it might be necessary to turn to the rationalist argumentations of a theorist like Jurgen Habermas. However, for some postmodernists, Habermas was suspected of habouring authoritarian tendencies, of articulating an impulse toward metanarratives, especially his articulation of an "ideal speech" condition. Thus, on the one hand to adopt Heidegger seemed to be to endorse an apolitical aestheticism; and on the other hand, to embrace Habermas, seemed to be to settle for the death of difference. In his own articulation of this apparently unholy alliance, White appeared to settle for Heidegger's perspective primarily as methodology, as a mechanism for destroying the present foundations, and Habermas' position as the basis of reconstruction. The latter seemed clear from his concern with advancing specific procedural principles, normative guidelines for a condition in which plurality was to exist without an impulse to conflict and, ultimately, mutual destruction.[31] As such, an Heideggerean impulse might be necessary in order continuously to contest the absence of plurality and an abstract equality wherein some individuals, groups or social formations were systematically dominated. With these tensions in mind, I now shift to a more specific discussion of what I reject about postmodernism.

---

[30] White, Political Theory, 18.

There are at least three broad reasons for rejecting the more pervasive postmodernist perspectives on politics, history, philosophy and criticism. First, I find problematic the extreme epistemological scepticism of postmodern theorists as well as the inflexible position toward so-called totalizing theories or metanarratives. Further, the acceptance of a conventionalist view of "truth" has given rise to a condition in which everything is collapsed to a "rhetorical effect" and one in which social praxis and material reality are too readily reduced to the medium of language; everything becomes discourse.[32] This is perhaps "best" exemplified in the writings of Lyotard.[33] In seeking to recognize the "fact" of multiple perspectives, to affirm the existence of multiple interpretations of the same events, Lyotard posited a pluralist position which advanced the notion that this multiplicity of interpretations is beyond constructive, truth-seeking argumentation.[34] Such diverse interpretations belong to heterogenous language games and there is no meta-language game whereby they can be evaluated. Any attempts at the latter were equal to speech-act coercion, an "injustice," and even a totalitarian effort to silence plural and conflicting voices.

---

[31] See, for e.g. White, Political Theory, 133.

In practice, this relativist position, which supposedly affirmed a liberal-pluralist universe, means that there is no possibility of demarcating between lies and truth, between actual events and fictive events. This is taken to an extreme in the position of those who argue that there is equal validity or, at least, no way of distinguishing between those right-wing revisionist historians who argue that the holocaust never occurred and those who argue that it did occur; these are simply competing voices. Take the study which presently occupies us. In Lyotard's universe, there would be no way of asserting the truth or falsehood of claims made by Ronald Reagan or George Bush, by the Central Intelligence Agency, the *Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional*, the Miskito Indians, Nicaraguan or North American Jews, and so on. In this view, they are simply (and absolutely), the products of different language games or "discursive differentials."[35] Every position holder must respect the position of the other, recognizing that such a position comes from her/his own truth, and are incommensurable.[36] The absurdity of this claim lies in its studied inability to acknowledge that some positions are outright lies. In contrast to this position, I will be defending a more rationalist account along the line of Habermas and Noam Chomsky, namely that some "truths," upon which political consent is based are fabrications and it is possible, to a reasonable extent, to ascertain manufactured truths and the interests they serve; there is a discernable difference between truth and fiction. As well, in contrast to Lyotard's aestheticization of politics and ethics, at the end of this chapter I proffer possibilities for assessing the moral defensibility of some actions over others.

---

[32] Neil Lazarus, "Doubting the New World Order: Marxism, realism, and the claims of postmodernist social theory," Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies 3, 3 (1991), 128-129.

[33] White, Political Theory, 7.

[34] Norris, "From the Sublime to the Absurd (Lyotard)," Uncritical Theory, 70-71.

The origins of this epistemological scepticism are multiple. An important one actually can be traced to the political experiences in

---

[35] Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Differend: phrase in dispute (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

[36] Norris, Uncritical Theory, 72.

France during the late 1960s and early 1970s when state power was so complete that it forced the student movement and radical thinkers underground and toward discourse. The conditions also produced an extreme political pessimism which has since birthed a number of French thinkers whose works are militantly opposed to metanarratives. In part, this was due to how they read, or perhaps misread, both the conditions of the times and the various intellectuals they chose to give voice to those experiences (especially Friedrich Nietzsche, Heidegger). Then, it was believed that *the* alternative hope to this condition of absolute state power was a "'total' critique offered of it [the system] by a heavily Stalinized Marxism."[37] However, this total critique, especially of the Stalinist variant, also had been exposed by French thinkers as a potential problem. Yet, instead of revising the systematic critiques of the system, Marxist or otherwise, postmodernists a priori accused *all* systematic thought of being "terroristic," claimed *all* discourse was suspect (except perhaps their own), and even the notion of conceptual meaning became feared as "repressive."[38] This perspective sought to destroy the motivation for sustained, judicious criticism and in the process rejected the possibility of universally recognized norms, whether of equality, dignity or moral responsibility. Perhaps inadvertently or inevitably, these new social critics imagined a condition of a social-Darwinian magnitude that has led feminists, and other radical thinkers of the left, to argue convincingly against many tenets of postmodernism.[39]

---

[37] Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 142.

[38] Eagleton, Literary Theory, 142; Michael C. Milam, "The Misuse of Nietzsche in Literary Theory," Philosophy and Literature, 16, 1 (1991), 320-332; and Peter Munz, "What's Postmodern, Anyway?," Philosophy and Literature 16, 1 (1991), 333-353.

The approach settled for by the French intellectuals and their rising numbers of offspring, reflect less what might be understood as an intelligible grasp of human subjectivity and possibilities than an approach of hopelessness and even fatalism, a postmodern despair. Postmodernists generally settled for "libidinal gestures" and "anarchist spontaneity" on the one hand and for "local, diffused and strategic" kinds of political work on the other hand.[40] The result of course is that postmodernists can advocate liberation at a local, primarily atomistic level but not on a systemic scale. This is a perspective which, in practice, is really a form of bourgeois individualism, a politics without the substance necessary for any form of collective emancipation or even for engendering the determination to struggle for change. Liberation, especially of groups, such as African Americans, or the working class or the indigenous peoples of the Americas, is contingent upon being able to advance rigourous critiques of the system and of proffering just and reasonable alternative(s).

---

[39] Sabina Lovibond, "Feminism and Postmodernism," New Left Review, 178 (1989); Martha C. Nussbaum, The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Alex Callanicos, Against Postmodernism: a Marxist Critique (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

[40] Eagleton, Literary Theory, 142.

In the absence of this kind of judicious and systemic critique, only insignificant and individualistic dents, if any, can be made in an acknowledged oppressive system. Rather than metanarratives, many postmodernist responses have been to produce chaotic, disparate, inconsistent and contradictory opinions and actions.[41] Further, since it is argued that any criticism is simply one among many, it is impossible to engage in anything remotely resembling a "Socratic dialogue" or close textual reading. To engage in either of the latter would be to arbitrarily impose one's opinion on another or to subject someone else's text to one's own and this apparently is postmodern "assault" and even "terrorism."[42] This is not to argue that there is a commonly held, authoritative definition of assault or terrorism as such. Rather, my view is that there is a qualitative or evaluative distinction to be made between, for example, actually being a slave or a holocaust survivor, and metaphorically or analogically imagining oneself as such. Further, to suggest to victims/survivors of slavery or the holocaust that their experiences were mere fiction (as in the case of Robert Faurisson),[43] and no worse than the arm-chair imagination of such experiences, is not only absurd; it is intellectually dishonest and irresponsible. To deploy language in this self-serving way inevitably results in an obscuration of what it means to actually *experience* an assault or terrorism. Words are too readily divorced from material reality and hence become incapable of reflecting or affirming how actual people experience actual events.

---

[41] Munz, "What's Postmodern, Anyway?," 338-339.

[42] Munz, "What's Postmodern, Anyway?," 338.

[43] See discussion in Norris, Uncritical Theory, 71-74, 84-85.

It is indeed ironic that the postmodernist architects who are constructing this supposedly "true pluralist" house are themselves always already privileged; they are one competing element among social elites. The funhouse that postmodernists build denies entry to the systemically disenfranchaised by shattering any foundation of hope and revolutionary change.[44] Yet, as stated earlier, some postmodernists claim to support and desire change for "the others," those who are downtrodden, marginalized, excluded and exploited. However, they do not have the conceptual or ethico-practical tools. In this study I will defend the view that postmodernists (as well as poststructuralists) must presuppose an ethical principle along the lines of the second formulation of Kant's Categorical Imperative -- assume people to be responsible and treat them as an end, never as a means[45] -- in order to engender any genuine commitment to

---

[44] For a refreshing contrast, Joshua Cohen and Joel Rodgers, "Knowledge, Morality and Hope: the social thought of Noam Chomsky," New Left Review 187 (May/June, 1991), 5-27.

[45] Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. J. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981), 36; and for a feminist development of this principle, see Onora O'Neill, Constructions of Reason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

"otherness." Short of this, they must explain how their pluralist universe can escape a Hobbesian state of nature wherein each woman, man and child is unconnected and looks out for nobody but themselves. Without presupposing at least a multicultural universalism, it makes no sense to lament asymmetrical power relations, marginalization, objectification, appropriation or racism.[46] It is my view that the objections to all metanarratives, that is, objection to any (more or less) authoritative and truthful narrative than that of each individual's narrative, or the reduction of metanarratives to a mere heuristic device is both naive and farcical. In agreement with Norris, I think postmodernist claims along the lines advanced by Lyotard, Rorty and Fish result in a politics of "passive acquiesence in whatever currently and contingently passes as 'good in the way of belief'," that this approach constitutes a "posture of moral and political indifference," a cowardly or irresponsible "refusal" to weigh conflicting evidence, a "suspension" of practical reason and principled judgment.[47]

A second reason why I find postmodernism problematic is exemplified in the writing of Baudrillard.[48] His writing is bent

---

1989).

[46] See Jurgen Habermas's discussion of "discourse ethics" in his Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990); and Thomas McCarthy, "Doing the Right Thing in Cross-cultural Representation," Ethics, 102, 4 (April, 1992), 644.

[47] Norris, Uncritical Theory, 86-87.

[48] Christopher Norris, "Lost in the Funhouse: Baudrillard and

on deconstructing public space into a multiplicity of electronic images. The inevitable and absurdist extreme of his approach was evidenced in two articles on the Gulf War. Baudrillard claimed that the Gulf War was not a "real war," and in fact that it "did not happen."[49] In this nonsensical tale, the Gulf War and not merely the justifications for it, was posited as a mass-media "myth," notwithstanding the actual brutality, the deaths, tortures, rapes and the massive social and material destruction.[50] There is a grain of "truth" in Baudrillard's claims if by stating that the war was not real he simply meant that how we understood the war, what many came to think of its moral and political-economic defensibility, were mostly the result of media conditioning. In fact, in Chapter V, I plan to show how the understanding of Nicaraguan Jewish and indigenous identities were shaped by the suppression and distortion of information, by the obscuration of actual events and contexts and by the particular construction of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy discourse. I also argue that many untruths were manufactured in order to disinform but that these could be unmasked through a careful and deconstructive examination. Thus, in the same way that

---

the politics of postmodernism" in What's Wrong with Postmodernism: critical theory and the end of philosophy (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 164-193.

[49] Baudrillard, "The Reality Gulf," The Guardian (11 January, 1992); and "La guerre du Golfe n'a pas eu lieu," Liberation (29 March, 1991).

[50] For an excellent critique: Norris, Uncritical Theory, esp. Chap. 1: "Baudrillard and the War that Never Happened."

Baudrillard's observations which interrogated the dominant media images and sound bites became possible, so too were other critical commentaries; we were not all "conditioned."

The Gulf War did happen and its primary victims were the usual victims of war, namely Iraqi and Kuwaiti women, children and the elderly. This fact of war's primary victims was mirrored in Nicaragua's Revolution and *Contra*/revolution. It is intellectually irresponsible to obscure the kind of violent repetition that occurred in Nicaragua between 1979 and 1990 and two years later in Iraq. Might it be the case that Baudrillard inadvertently has done what most Western intellectual apologists do to mask the brutality and horror of their countries' foreign policy: argue that certain events did not happen, that it was a figment of an absolutist imagination or a media creation and, ipso facto, the public conscience is cleared and a rationally ascertained culpability is erased? The context of this debate, namely Europe in the midst of holocaust revisionism, racist terrorism against asylum seekers in France and Germany, adds to the political and moral danger of absurdist commentaries.[51]

Third and finally, this work rejects postmodernism because of the absence of a viable liberationist politics and because of postmodernists' opposition to a rationally defensible ethics. This refusal of ethics is somewhat ironic; postmodernists need to presuppose an (universal) ethics in which each political actor respects the position of every other political actor if the "postmodern condition" is to avoid degenerating into a social Darwinian order. Or, postmodernists need to assume a human condition analogous to Robert Paul Wolff's anarchism in which each autonomous individual respects and self-consciously seeks to preserve other individuals' freedom.[52] However, unlike Wolff, who carefully developed his arguments on autonomy and against coercion, no similar rational defense is proffered by postmodernists, first because there is a rejection of systematic argumentation and second, because there is no presupposition about what it might mean to be basically human (and hence to be respected or treated as such). Thus there can be no rational arguments in defense of treating all humans (say) as if they were equal or entitled to be free.

---

[51] See, Jurgen Habermas, "The Second Life Fiction of the Federal Republic: We Have Become 'Normal' Again," New Left Review 197 (January/February, 1993), 58-66; Habermas, The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1989), 22-47; and Norris, "Consensus Reality and Manufactured Truth," in Uncritical Theory, 159-191.

The absence of a viable communicative ethics and liberationist politics is traceable to the assumption/acceptance of the view that any over-arching revolutionary program which seeks to liberate human beings from hopelessness and despair is a delusion. This "absolute" nihilism is attributed to Nietzsche, or at least to an orthodox reading of Nietzsche. Michael C. Milam's essay actually drew upon Nietzsche's own writings to illustrate the gratuitous and sometimes careless readings which have characterized some postmodernist writings on Nietzsche. The latter is read in three general ways: "Nietzsche as first deconstructionist" (Paul de Man), "Nietzsche as impotent postmodernist" (David B. Allison) and/or "Nietzsche as linguistic nihilist" (Jacques Derrida, J. Hillis Miller).[53] These claims and subsequent critical analyses are complex and ought to be interrogated by any political theorist if only because of the pervasive influence they exert over contemporary intellectual life.[54] Let us consider the major tenets of this debate since the latter will be relevant to my effort to deconstruct but also to reconstruct various events, discourses, and material and social relations during the *Contra*/revolution.

---

[52] Wolff, In Defense of Anarchism (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 3-19; and also Peter Kropotkin, "Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles," in Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamplets, ed., Roger Baldwin (New York: Dover, 1970), 63, 196-218.

I.4. Nietzsche, Interpretation and History

This debate among Nietzsche scholars is concerned with Nietzsche's belief that some interpretations could have greater validity than others. This is substantively different from the postmodernist belief that all is simply interpretation and equally false.[55] For instance, J. Hillis Miller claimed that "[A]ll interpretation, according to Nietzsche, is misinterpretation, the misinterpretation of the traces of the past for some present purpose."[56] According to Miller's reading, Nietzsche wanted to destroy all historical interpretation because people misuse historical examples.[57] However, Miller's claim/perspective, is contradictory. In order to defend this claim, either Nietzsche and/or Miller would have had to examine the past, ascertained various "traces" which are used erroneously in the present and then assigned a particular problematic interpretation to the present usage. This, e/valuation, in turn, would have led to an opposition to historical interpretation. The review would have left open to contestation Miller's own interpretation, against genetic or historical interpretation, derived from the uses of the past: Is it plausible? For postmodernists, this logical and evaluative enquiry become moot given the assumption that no over-arching standard exists nor can exist in a relativist universe; how does one evaluate the conflicting interpretations if metanarratives are, a priori, totalitarian or terroristic?

---

[53] See Derrida, Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); de Man, Allegories of Reading: Figural Language In Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Allison, "Destruction/Deconstruction in the Text of Nietzsche," Boundary 2, 8 (1979), although the latter is not a "literary" critic as such. See, Milam, "The Misuse of Nietzsche," 320, 331n1.

[54] Norris, Uncritical Theory, 25-31; Munz, "What's Postmodern, Anyway?," 333-353.

---

[55] For alternative examinations: Alaudemarie Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Alan White, Nietzsche's Labyrinth (London: Routledge, 1990); Alan D. Schrift, Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[56] Miller, Victorian Subjects (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 279.

[57] It is best to read Nietzsche's essay, "The Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" in his Untimely Meditations, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge University Press [1874], 1983), 57-123.

Postmodernists, such as de Man, read Nietzsche's work prior to The Birth of Tragedy as in the "logocentric tradition" and his writings thereafter as primarily deconstructive, that is, Nietzsche's writings supposedly came to represent a nihilism of reference and gave priority to "linguistic and semantic elements over the historical."[58] De Man's Nietzsche is read to conclude that all writing, including philosophy, cannot escape the nihilism of reference. Further, whatever an individual thinks, says or writes is simply a projection of her own standpoint and being which has been extended by her own imagination.[59] There is no meta-standard for critiquing its truth or validity, in fact, the very existence of other than consensus-truth, is rejected. Ironically, de Man subjected Nietzsche's texts to an "historical interpretation" in order to prove the "impossibility of 'genetic,' i.e., historical interpretation."[60] Moreover, in his writing, de Man conveniently ignored Nietzsche's "perspectivism" as exemplified in writings such as On the Genealogy of Morals.[61] As methodology it incorporated philological, anthropological, historical and philosophical perspectives and, simultaneously, critically brought them to bear upon a particular subject matter. Milam argued that Nietzsche's "intent" in deploying this perspectivism is ignored by postmodernists who simply argue that the author is "poststructurally dead," meaning intentions not only cannot be known, they are irrelevant.[62] If this is the case, then Nietzsche's intentions are irrelevant and unintelligible anyway. Or, as Foucault claimed, individuals are "totally imprinted by history," are overdetermined and, as such, individual motivations and intentions are really nothingness; their are no authorial intentions.[63] As such, this position goes even further than a contemporary variant, methodological individualism. The proponents of the latter argue that the end result of disparate individual intentions is a social reality which looks nothing like the particular individual intentions; nevertheless they accept that there are (ineffective) intentions.[64]

---

[58] Milam, "The Misuse of Nietzsche," 324.

[59] Munz, "What's Postmodern, Anyway," 337.

[60] Milam, "The Misuse of Nietzsche," 325.

---

[61] See, Paul Redding, "Nietzschean Perspectivism and the Logic of Practical Reason," The Philosophical Forum, XXII, 1 (Fall, 1990), 72-89; and Roderick M. Stewart, "Nietzsche's Perspectivism and the Autonomy of the Master Type," Nous 20 (1986).

[62] See Linda Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism Versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory," Signs 13, 3 (1988), 415-416.

[63] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 83.

[64] Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism Versus Post-Structuralism," 416.

Rejecting the postmodernist sleight of hand which negates authorial intentions, Milam argued that Nietzsche's enterprise as seen in Thus Spoke Zarasthustra evoked the Persian prophet in order for Nietzsche to self-consciously create himself as the modern gadfly and "to give a new, and positive, approach to human history, significance, value, and meaning," not simply to destroy.[65] In Beyond Good and Evil and The Will to Power, Nietzsche claimed that Western thought had become dominated by Christian moral thinking and interpretations of the world. This included the reification and positing of dualistic absolutes: being/nothingness, body/mind, evil/sacred, good/bad, true/false. In fact, throughout this study, I will highlight these dualisms as they relate to international politics and especially United States foreign policy since the 1800s: Christian/heathen, white/pigmented, us/them, communist/democrat, friend/foe. In Chapters II, III and IV, this work shows how dualisms were a habitual feature of representation and interpretation in United States inter/national politics. In Chapters V, VI and VII, the problems of dualistic absolutes will come into sharper focus as I examine how much knowledge is lost, obscured and distorted when either/or thinking was employed in political relations between, for example, indigenous peoples of the Americas and Europeans. When the concepts are broken down, the false duality is revealed as farce. For example, the United States maintained trade relations with its so-called "foe," the Soviet Union and, further, China, a communist state and hence foe, received "favoured nation" trade status. Moreover, an interrogation of this duality seems to confirm Foucault's position that inevitably, dualisms represent fundamentally unequal relations; one side of the "dual" is subordinate, and posited as inferior.

---

[65] Milam, "The Misuse of Nietzsche," 325.

Political philosophers working within this dominant Western structure of thought invariably faced either/or propositions, absolute and immutable concepts and inevitably this philosophical atavism led to nihilism and, at best, contradiction. The "death of god," as Nietzsche pronounced, left a mode of thinking tragically enmeshed in dualisms and consequently, "[E]xtreme positions are not succeeded by moderate ones but by extreme positions of the opposite kind....Nihilism appears at this point...because one has come to mistrust any 'meaning' in existence."[66] In clarifying this consequence, Nietzsche did not accept that this *had to be* the case, only that it was a logical outcome of "Christian-moral interpretations," which implicitly were evaluated as *worse than* Nietzsche's own perspectivism. He went on to say that "[O]ne interpretation has collapsed; but because it was considered *the* interpretation it now seems as if there were no meaning at all in existence."[67] According to Alan D. Schrift, in place of this nihilism, Nietzsche posited a "new" idea of interpretation, a "perspectival *multiplicity* and interpretive *pluralism*" which sought to circumvent the "empty relativism," and instead to retain "a standard by which to distinguish 'better' from 'worse' interpretations."[68] This ethical component is contrary to postmodern positions which cultivate extreme relativism.

---

[66] Nietzsche, The Will to Power, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1967), 55; and also Beyond Good and Evil, Basic Writings of Nietzsche, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 1968), 20.

Nietzsche's desire in destroying existing standards was not to create a standardless condition. Rather, it was to construct a better and "more noble" condition.[69] Ironically in this light, postmodern criticism of Enlightenment thought and rationality can be understood as the extreme opposite of Enlightenment: un-Enlightened and irrational or, at best, what Norris termed "uncritical theory."[70] Further, Milam unsympathically stated that too often deconstruction in its postmodern variant "is firmly rooted in what Nietzsche considered the legacy of absolutism and the Christian-moral interpretation of the world and, in turn, may be judged according to his categories as nihilistic."[71] Moreover, the sometimes wild and unsubstantiated claims, reification and celebration of irrationality and ahistoricism have produced perspectives which are undeniably nihilistic and arguably un-Nietzschean.

---

[67] Nietzsche, The Will to Power, 55; and also Beyond Good and Evil, 20.

[68] Schrift, Nietzsche, 191-192.

[69] E.L. Allen, From Plato to Nietzsche (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Premier Book, 1957), 170; Milam, "The Misuse of Nietzsche," 326; and Schrift, Nietzsche, 191-192.

[70] Norris, Uncritical Theory, esp. Chaps. 4 and 6.

[71] Milam, "The Misuse of Nietzsche," 330.

One of the few things that seem clear or at least decipherable in the face of these complex developments is the pressing need to analyze critically prevailing and contending ideologies for their meaning. As well, there is a need for and, in fact, there already exist self-conscious and sometimes hubristic efforts to subvert and to destroy those political and ideological claims which are untrue (fabricated or manufactured) and, hence, confound the understanding and negatively constrain any "real" possibility of human agency and liberation. This is to suggest that not all normative ideas are believed to be illusionary, a sign of "false consciousness."[72] Rather, some ideas might be held although the proponents are fully aware that they cannot be, or have not been, realized at least in material reality. For example, Sir Thomas More knew his egalitarian ideas in Utopia were not necessarily reflected in material conditions nor general human experiences but he did not pretend otherwise.[73] Similarly, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's musings in Herland, Margaret Atwood's Handmaid's Tale or George Orwell's 1984 were not meant to be taken literally although they did spark the imagination toward reflecting upon the relationship between the imaginary and the real.[74]

---

[72] John B. Thompson, "Language and ideology: a framework for analysis," The Sociological Review 35, 3 (August, 1987), 517-536.

[73] Moore, Utopia (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904).

Rene Descartes articulated in his text Discourse on the Method that imaginary fables (in which interestingly he included history), can awaken those that slumber and dream, they can awaken the mind. However, he also cautioned that fables can lead one to imagine things which are impossible.[75] Although "gifts of the mind" such as eloquence, poetry and the creation of fables are the fruits of study, they, in Descartes' view, were no substitute for science, or a "method" which produces more certain knowledge. In this respect, texts such as Utopia, Herland or 1984 can produce fruits toward human understanding, but not in the same sense that, for example, a critical reading or empirical validation might produce.

To the extent that any ideas are held and they remain unexamined or are thought to be "true" or achievable despite the evidence to the contrary, then they are, in one sense, ideological. This study will show that some ideas are held because they support national, class, race/ethnic, gender and/or some other interests.[76] Many of these ideas are irrational and would not withstand rigourous scrutiny. Given the extent to which ideas account for a great deal of what nation-states, societies or social formations, individuals, classes or a people do to themselves and to others, it makes sense to examine such ideas and ideologies, to deconstruct them.

---

[74] Atwood, Handmaid's Tale (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1985); Gilman, Herland (New York: Pantheon, 1979); and Orwell, 1984 (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984).

[75] Descartes, Discourse on the Method and Meditation on First Philosophy, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co., 1980), I, 3-4.

[76] Angela Davis, Women, Race and Class (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), esp. Chaps. 3, 9, 10; bell hooks and Cornel West, Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1991), 31-46; and Raymond Boudon, The Analysis of Ideology, trans. Malcolm Slater (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), esp. Parts I-II.

Despite Descartes' ruminations, his method produces only one kind of certainty and the knowledge generated makes sense only in the context of assumptions postulated. To the extent that assumptions are contestable, so too are the subsequent interpretations derived from such assumptions. In the context of other assumptions or even alternative theories, particular empiricial verifications, for example, may be unintelligible. In effect, Sir Isaac Newton admitted this when he stated that what was "real" was that to which his method could be applied.[77] Newton's method was the reality or, at least, determined what was real or certain. Actual events were rendered incomprehensible if they did not conform with his preconceived methodological assumptions. The assumptions, themselves, became reified and uncontested. Yet, to a significant degree, "facts," events and actions are interpreted by a belief system, a worldview, which is always already in existence.

Belief systems attempt to give meaning, coherency and order to what might seem like elusive, disparate and unconnected events; they attempt to make sense of these phenomena. Some attempts are more sensible, more intelligible than others. For example, the awakening body of postcolonial literature increasingly illume how, in some cases, worldviews attempt to reduce irreducible identities to a homogeneous whole and, in so doing, obscure profound differences.[78] Moreover, as Kenneth Waltz argued, "[N]o amount of data collecting can prove it [a particular explanation] so, for data do not interpret themselves. The facts may seem to support a given theory; they may support a radically different theory still better."[79] Thus, to the extent that interpretations are required, the theorist of inter/national politics is, unavoidably, subjective. This does not mean that her explanation is not plausible, simply that it is always disputable or contestable.

---

[77] **Newton, cited in Kenneth Waltz, "Political Philosophy and the Study of International Relations" in Theoretical Aspects of International Relations," ed., William T.R. Fox (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 56-57.**

One of the twentieth century's articulations of the need for unravelling, invoking an integrity unheralded in his day, was in the work of Albert Camus, especially in The Rebel and Resistance, Rebellion, and Death. In the latter, Camus argued that "our Leftist intellectuals" must "undertake a critique of the reasonings and ideologies to which they have hitherto subscribed," especially those which wreak havoc.[80] Today, this view might seem naive in the face of the celebration of the irrational and the self-consciously playful -- what Camus would have called "irresponsible" -- effort to unsettle and even destroy an adherence to any normative beliefs. The "unsettlingly" is experienced by those with institutional power and probably more by those without such power. As will be discussed in Chapter II, this lends itself to critiques such as that by Jurgen Habermas to the effect that this unsettling only preserves the status quo and thus is not a means for liberation by the marginalized.[81]

---

[78] Wonderful examples include Jamaica kincaid, Rigoberta Menchu, Edward Said, Homi Babha, Vikram Seth, Michael Ondaatje, Ben Okri and Kazuo Ishiguro. See an accessible account in Pico Iyer, "The Empire Writes Back," Time (February 8, 1993), 68-73.

[79] Waltz, "Political Philosophy," 53.

[80] Camus, "Socialism of the Gallows," in Resistance, Rebellion, and Death, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 170-71.

In the face of this intellectual-practical "schizophrenia," as Camus might have termed it, there is a need for "pitiless self-criticism, exercise of the heart, close reasoning, and a little modesty."[82] For Camus, any unqualified acceptance of political-ideological or methodological claims had the potential to lead to the existence of totalitarianism, whether a "socialism of the gallows" and/or what Noam Chomsky today calls "brainwashing under democracy."[83] Ideas need to be critically engaged and it is the responsibility of inter/national political critics to maintain their integrity in the face of multiple and divergent demands. Camus lucidly challenged what he called the "lack" of brilliance on the Right and, the growing evidence of conformity on the Left, including the fact that it was "in complete decadence, a prisoner of words, caught in its own vocabulary, capable merely of stereotyped replies."[84] Further, he claimed that the Left had (has) become static, inflexible and even reactionary; perhaps enclosed in the prison house of its own discourse. Responses to crises were without integrity, and merely represented a regurgitation of pre-conceived words/ideas which were forced to fit ever-changing realities.

---

[81] Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," New German Critique 22 (Winter, 1981), 3-14.

[82] Camus, Resistance, Rebellion, 170.

[83] See for e.g. Chomsky, On Power and Ideology: The Managua Lectures (Boston: South End Press, 1987); and his Deterring Democracy (New York: Hill and Wang, 1991).

These complex developments vitiate the unproblematic deployment of classical and post/modern concepts. However, most of all they call into question the easy acceptance of traditional, modern and postmodern assumptions which have acted as guide posts for analyses in inter/national politics. In the following section, concepts central to politics will be critically assessed with an eye to determining what significance they hold for theorizing in international politics generally and about the Nicaraguan *Contra*/revolution in particular. I discuss power, followed by ideology, and how they interface simultaneously to empower some and preserve relations of domination for others.

I.5. Power and Politics

Realism, sometimes called Machiavellianism, is one of the dominant worldviews in the field of international politics and, perhaps, the one which holds the most sway among policymakers within the United States. Adherents to realist assumptions conceive of power as the ability to control and more specifically as domination. The idea of power as control, usually involving physical and/or psychological violence, is only one form of power.[85] The notion of social and political relations being characterized by domination is a more specific form of power relations. In order to fully grasp the idea of power, it is useful to examine the relations between individual actions, social structures and institutional arrangements in an historical context. Thompson distinguished two conceptual levels for examining power relations: the level of actions and the institutional level.[86]

---

[84] Camus, Resistance, Rebellion, Death, 170-171.

In the first instance, power connotes the ability of a political actor or agent to pursue her aims and interests. An autonomous political agent is one who has the ability to act, to intervene in the course of events, to alter that course and to achieve a desired outcome.[87] In the second instance, at the level of institutions, power connotes those socially constructed arrangements which systematically enable and empower some people as agents and allow them to make decisions, to pursue and realize desired ends and interests. These agentic pursuits are circumscribed or limited by social structures, those which define the permissable range of institutional variations.[88] As stated earlier, domination is a specific variant of these power relations. By domination is meant those "relations of power established at an institutional level which are systematically asymmetrical."[89] Further, Thompson argued that relations of power become domination when socially and institutionally constructed agents, groups (or states), are endowed with the ability to act, to pursue and realize aims and interests from which other agents, groups (and states) are systematically excluded either overtly or covertly. Such asymmetries are evident within and across ethnicity, socio-economic classes, genders and nationalities. A deconstruction of power relations within inter/national politics will reveal that power is not only understood as control or power-over, but fundamentally as domination.

---

[85] Robert F. Litke, "Violence and Power," International Social Science Journal, 132 (May 1992), 172.

[86] Thompson, "Language and ideology," 518-519.

[87] See, Peter A. Facione, Donald Scherer and Thomas Attig, Ethics and Society, 2nd edn. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall, 1991), 150-166.

Power-over is the conception which is most clearly articulated in inter/national politics and, according to C.B. Macpherson, has its origins in modern political science starting with Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes.[90] I would argue, in fact, that various articulations of power as domination and compelling critiques of these articulations can be traced to the political cynic Thrasymachus in The Republic of Plato or to Thucydides' The History of the

---

[88] Thompson, "Language and ideology," 518-519.

[89] Thompson, "Language and ideology," 519.

[90] Macpherson, Democratic Theory: essays in retrieval (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 42.

Peloponnesian War. In the latter text, Thucydides posited a complex and multilayered representation of the individual, social and inter/national dynamics during the war between Athens and Sparta (431-404 B.C.). In the Melian dialogue, Thucydides re/constructed an insightful exchange between Athens, the proponent of power as the basis of international relations and Melos, the proponent of equality and justice as additional aspects of such relations. A synopsis of the dialogue follows:

> Athenians: We are seeking the safety of your state; for we wish you to become our subjects with least trouble to ourselves and we would like you to survive in our interests as well as your own.
>
> Melians: It may be your interest to be our masters: how can it be ours to be your slaves?
>
> Athenians: By submitting you would avoid a terrible fate, and we should gain by not destroying you...
>
> Melians: Surely...it would be criminal cowardice in us, who are still free not to take any and every measure before submitting to slavery.
>
> Athenians: No, if you reflect calmly; *for this is not a competition in heroism between equals*, where your honour is at stake, but a question of self-preservation, to save you from a struggle with a far stronger power....*The most successful people are those who stand up to their equals, behave properly to their superiors, and treat their inferiors fairly.* Think it over when we withdraw, and reflect once and again that you have only one country, and that its prosperity or ruin depends on one decision [to freely submit to subjugation].[91]

This "dialogue" captured what might be called the *realist*

---

[91] Thucydides, History, trans. Rex Warner (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, Inc., [1954] 1987), V.84-116, 400-408 .

fallacy: that primarily because a larger and *materially* more powerful state wills something, it ought to be done; that the justification(s) it proffers become true, just and fair. On what grounds? Because, as in this case, Athens says so and had the brute strength (what power was reduced to) to beat Melos into submission. First, the Athenian claimed they wanted to protect Melos; this meant that Melos would be subjected or subservient to Athenian rule. Athens, the patriarch, would care for Melos, the dependent (child). Second, the Athenians claimed that the Melian submission was *necessary* for Melos to avoid being destroyed by Athens. Thus coercion euphemistically was called "choice" and the Athenians falsely argued that Melos had an autonomous choice to decide its own destiny. However, the choice was between subjugation and violence or what the Melians analogically and aptly named a "master/slave" relationship. For a choice to have existed, Athens would have had to be prepared to respect and live with whatever decision Melos made, including the decision to remain nonaligned. For example, in Chapters II, III and IV, I show that the United States' inability to accept Nicaragua's *Sandinista* government's choices was a denial of the principles of equality, state sovereignty and the right to self-determination.

The Athenian position was a denial of equality and freedom. It was an affirmation of the will to power almost exclusively based upon coercion and violence or brute strength. The very idea of persuasion or "diplomacy" was reduced to a farce since its intent was not to reach a mutually agreed compromise but to persuade people to become enslaved through paternalistic assertions such as "its in their best interests." Within this conception, power resided in those who could articulate and enforce the notion of "best interests"; Athens could, Melos could not. Melos disagreed with Athens' interpretation of what was best; however, Athens compelled Melos to exist contrary to its own desires. Athens had power-over Melos and exercised that power to subjugate Melos in its own interests. In this case, although the intended subjugated state did not think virtual enslavement was in its own best interests, and asserted its own subjectivity by committing itself to fight for freedom, the powerful Althens mis-read this as "irrational" and as "false heroism."

In the ontology of the Athenians, Melos had no equal status and, as an inferior, the Athenians thought the latter should have recognized its *duty* to submit. The basis of Athen's *right* was its self-assertion of superior military power and the self-defined superiority of the Athenian peoples. Athens constructed Melos' unequal status by differentiating Melos from Athens (the implicit standard) and, hence, the supposed inequality and inferiority of Melians was partly constitutive of international discourse. The Athenians apparently were prepared to treat the Melians "fairly," that is, in the Aristotelian sense: treat equals as equals and unequals as unequals. This, however, does not address the question of what constituted the basis of Athen's superiority and

Melos' inferiority except the Athenian self-aggrandizing assertions backed-up by brute strength. This extraordinary il-logic has captivated a whole tradition of political theorists in international relations. It is often echoed in modern "realist" conceptions of international politics.

This conception of power is critiqued at a micro level by modern liberal theorists and post-structuralists. One of the best critiques of this convention of equating coercion and brute strength with right and duty, especially in the context of gender, is John Stuart Mill's On the Subjection of Women, particularly the first five sections.[92] Mill argued that the institutional and structural subordination of one sex to the other, of women to men, is wrong in itself. And, *contra* gender inequality, he argued for "a principle of perfect equality." Among other contestable justifications, Mill centred the opinions defending subjugation in convention, male insecurity, ignorance and convenience, especially as in the case of wives who, by virtue of legal bond(age), were subservient to husbands from dust to dawn. There is no "natural" basis for domination between women and men or for any other social formation. There may be useful justifications but these are derived from convention (habit and more accurately, "bad habit") or necessity, namely in some cases of self-defense.

This recognition of the socially constructed nature of sex has led many contemporary feminists, especially those influenced by post-structuralism, beyond Mill's liberal (and thus far generally ineffective) "solutions" to a negative politics, and a position of nominalism.[93] The category of "woman" is deconstructed into nothingness, is posited as fictive and inextricably mired in patriarchal constructs which inevitably posit "woman" as unequal, as inferior to "man," the universal standard. Further, because woman is always posited oppositionally *in relation* to man, the standard in logocentric discourse, it is necessary to reject not only the prior representations but all representations which require logocentricism in order to define and construct any alternative. The logical outcome of this negative positionality is that woman is articulated (via Derrida) as a non-determinate identity, a non-figure or a simulacrum.[94] Similarly, Foucault also rejected the Western philosophic tendency to construct subjects oppositionally, as Athens did with Melos: superior/inferior, master/slave. In his writing, he refused demarcations such as proletariat/bourgeoisie, woman/man and oppressor/oppressed because, as he saw it, these oppositional constructions invariably recreated and sustained asymmetrical relations of power.[95] In effect, post-structuralists deconstruct without any evaluative differentiation between say, the revolutionary and the reactionary.

---

[92] Mill, On the Subjection of Women, ed. Susan Moller Okin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988).

---

[93] Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism and Post-Structuralism," 416-419.

[94] Derrida, Spurs, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 49.

[95] Biddy Martin, "Feminism, Criticism, and Foucault," New German Critique 27 (1982), 1.

Those feminists who accept this view argue, incorrectly, that if Foucault-style deconstruction of logocentric categories is taken to its inevitable conclusion, then the idea of woman's oppression will become obsolete.[96] This is myopic and even absurdist reasoning. Undermining the notion of "woman" leaves nothingness and, of course, nothingness requires no liberation from oppression, from rape, battery, unequal pay for equal work, inequitable hiring, glass-ceilings or unfair tenure and promotion. How a revolution in discourse, on the page (read by a few), would produce a one-to-one correlation with a revolution in social and material relations, in asymmetrical relations of institutional and structural power, is not answered by deconstruction of language categories. Along this same line of reasoning, to deconstruct the category "international" or the identities of Nicaragua's Miskitos, or African-Americans, or Jews will not, ipso facto, eradicate in the first instance relations between nation-states characterized by asymmetrical power relations, nor in the second instance, the social fact of racism and anti-Semitism. Thus, against this totalizing refusal, in Chapters V through VII, various other approaches to identity and liberation will be articulated. However, for the moment, I want to return to classical texts and the notions of power-over and power-as-domination.

---

[96] Martin, "Feminism, Criticism, and Foucault," 16-17, 21-24.

In another classical text, The Republic of Plato (336 B.-347 E), Thrasymachus argued about the nature of government, power and justice with Polemarchus, Glaucon and Socrates. His view seemed to echo Thucydides' representation of the Athenian position in the Melian dialogue. Thrasymachus suggested, counter Socrates, that rulers always rule in their own interests and, further, they obscure this fact through the deployment of a language of justice and rightness. Self-interested rulers attempt to mislead the masses by dualistically characterizing attitudes and behaviours into "just" and "unjust," or "right" and "wrong." What was just and right invariably was that which was in the interests of rulers, the dominant. Or, as Thrasymachus bluntly puts it, what was "'just' or 'right' means nothing but what is in the interests of the stronger party."[97]

Such dualistic conceptualizations were central to establishment morality and were deployed by the powerful to obscure systematically asymmetrical relations of power/domination. Further, it was argued by Thrasymachus that laws made for the governed invariably were inimical to the latters' interests despite the rulers' claims to the contrary. Moreover, "wrongdoers" or the "unjust" merely connoted those persons who acted against the interests of the rulers. Thus, according to this ancient view, might is ("determines") right. By logical extension, the very ideas of right and wrong or justice are meaningless and unintelligible outside of knowledge of social and material relations; and the structural distribution of power, whether across class, race, gender, sexuality, and/or nation-states. In Thrasymachus' view, the perfect social role in society would be as part of the ruling class and, especially, to be a despot or tyrant. However, if a ruler wanted to reign into infinity, it was better for her to be a benevolent despot in order to mask the relations of power/domination.

---

[97] Plato, The Republic, trans. Cornford, III.1.339, 18. All of Chap. 3 is worth a re-read.

Building upon classical conceptions of power/domination, Macpherson pointed out that modern politics, beginning with Machiavelli and Hobbes, "has to do with power, understood broadly as men's ability to get what they want by controlling others."[98] Hobbes also conceived of "men" as perfectly equal and power as comparative and zero-sum in relations between men: "because the powers of one man resisteth and hindereth the effects of the power of another: power simply is no more, but the excess of the power of one above that of another."[99] In effect, there is no perfect equality because in either/or constructed relations, one person exercised an "excess" of power; there was no "sharing," at least in pre-institutional relations (the "state of nature"). Similarly, Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan in Power and Society distinguished between general and specific effects but ultimately defined it as asymmetrical: "power in the political sense cannot be conceived as the ability to produce intended effects in general, but only such effects as directly involve other persons: political power is distinguished from power over nature as power over men."[100] Likewise, Carl Friedrich argued that political "power is always power over other men."[101] If this is the "essence" of political power, then by logical extension, this view would seem to support political domination of one class by another, one race or ethnicity by another, the subordination of one gender by another, and/or one state by another. The focus upon these kinds of personal and social demarcations allow for a centring on subjects/agents who act for reasons which are discernable, contestable and transformable in ways that focusing on abstract formations such as "states" in the realist or world systems sense, do not allow.

---

[98] Macpherson, Democratic Theory, 42.

[99] Hobbes, Elements of Law, Natural and Politic, Part I, chap. 8, ed., Frederick Toonies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1640], 1928).

In modern politics, particularly the realist articulation of it, power increasingly was reduced to and articulated as "power-over," and more specifically, as domination. Men dominate other men. Yet, to accept this classical view represented by the Athenians, is to deny outright the view represented by the Melians. The latter view has always coexisted alongside the articulations of the desires to dominate and some wo/men have been able to order their existence in ways which invalidate the notion of a "natural" propensity to dominate. Collaboration is as much a part of the human experience as the position represented by the Athenians. However, power-over need not mean domination, force, coercion or control.

---

[100] Lasswell and Kaplan, Power and Society: a framework for political inquiry (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950), 75.

[101] Friedrich, Man and his Government: an empirical theory of politics (New York: McGraw, 1963), 160.

Drawing upon diverse works from Plato to Sara Ruddick,[102] Thomas Wartenberg argued that power-over can have positive connotations and can lead to desirable transformation.[103] For example, drawing on Ruddick's "maternal thinking," a cognitive, practical experience both women and men can engage in, he argued that mothering need not be an oppressive social institution, as some radical feminists such as Jeffner Allen, have suggested.[104] Allen viewed mothering as an oppressive "institution" which was inextricably and irrecoverably mired in patriarchal and, hence, unequal gender relations. The institution of motherhood needed to be "evacuated" because it "annihilated" the very being of women. In contrast, Wartenberg via Ruddick, suggested that the experiences or praxis of mothering can be understood as a form of power-over children which can lead to them flourishing or stagnating, being independent, autonomous agents or dependent, insecure beings.

---

[102] See esp. Ruddick's "Maternal Thinking," in Women and Values: Readings in Recent Feminist Philosophy, ed. Marilyn Pearsall (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1986), 340-351.

[103] Wartenberg, The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

[104] Allen, "The Annihilation of Women," in Women and Values, ed. Pearsall, 91-101.

Mothering, for those who chose it, could be powerful and empowering. Thus, it was conceived that power-over could lead to empowerment: it also could lead to enslavement, subjugation and the negation of autonomy.

Another example is that: while education in which teachers possess power-over students can lead to individual self-determination and engender critical thinkers, it also can lead to dependence and conformity. A number of factors influence the power dynamic in relations between, for example, mother-child, teacher-student or government-citizens, including human agency, the social structures and environment and the existence of genuine alternatives. These factors mediate power and influence the extent to which individuals (as agents) and/or communities exercise power-over themselves in order to attain self-defined ends.

Despite the various forms of power -- including "power to" do something, power as consensus or cooperation -- in the twentieth century, many political theorists start from the assumption that the exercise of power in politics is evident when one individual or group demonstrates the ability to dominate and control others.[105] This view was embodied in the works of one of the major theorists of the realist tradition, Hans J. Morgenthau. Morgenthau claimed that "[P]ower may comprise anything that establishes and maintains the control of men over men...from physical violence to the most subtle psychological ties by which one mind controls another."[106] Morgenthau equated power with control and, arguably, domination over others. However, he claimed that in Western democratic traditions this domination has been mediated by constitutional safeguards.

---

[105] Macpherson, Democratic Theory, 42-45.

These "safeguards" must be more relevant to domestic/national politics than to international politics, to the extent that extraterritorial laws are inherently a violation of the sovereignty of the external state to which they are extended and imposed. An example of this is the kidnapping, extraterritorial transport and the subsequent trial and imprisonment of former Panamanian President Manuel Noriega, ostensibly for engaging in drug trafficking and other illicit activities. Apparently those who authorized this act, namely the United States President George Bush and the Pentagon, were not equally complicitous. However, to return to the fact of differential power, it is worth noting that the mere fact that the United States could both authorize and carry out this act, despite international level "safeguards" indicated military power and domination. Further, the absence of mutuality is evident in the fact that Noriega could not have expressed his revulsion of any United States president by doing the same: that is, he could not have accused Bush of illicit activities, bombed Washington, D.C. and maybe Maryland, stormed the White House, captured and transported Bush to Panama, compelled him to wallow in prison for months before trial and finally imprison (by then "former" United States president) for life. This is not to suggest that Noriega was a "legitimate" ruler according to modern rules of legitimacy any more than to say that Bush was an "illegitimate" leader, nor is it a rejection of the principle that interventions are always unjustified. Rather, it is about the reality of how modern power is deployed to violate the principle of equal sovereignty and how this fact can be obscured through tenuous assertions about concern for (Panamanian) democracy or an interest in smashing the lucrative drug trade. The farce of kidnapping a foreign head of state, normally called terrorism, on drug trafficking charges about which several Administrations had knowledge, called into question the ease with which Morgenthau advanced his notion of constitutional safeguards.[107]

---

[106] Morgenthau, The Politics of Nations (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 9.

For Morgenthau, the central dilemma was dissipating that power through laws. Otherwise dominance would be by "that untamed and barbaric force which finds its laws in nothing but its own strength and its sole justification in its aggrandizement."[108] Thus by unproblematically extending inferences about "individual" power to the idea of collective empowerment, he confronts the same difficulties Hobbes encountered in Leviathan. How do individuals become law-abiding and egalitarian if they are not already ("naturally") predisposed toward this end? In effect, individuals are partly authors of their own fates and depending on circumstances can construct themselves (or be constructed) variously. They can use power intelligently or they can abuse power; they can share power and/or they can dominate.

---

[107] For lucid critiques: Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall, Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies, and the CIA in Central America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), esp. 65-127; and the documentary film, "The Panama Deception," by Barbara Trent, ed. David Kasper (1992).

[108] Morgenthau, The Politics of Nations, 9.

The modern view of power as domination clearly presents a paradox. If Morgenthau's claims are accepted, it seems dubious that laws could constrain what was "natural" or "inevitable" except by making citizens cower before a more awesome and threatening power and even then, only when that power was visible. Yet, a regime born and preserved through fear is not deserving of the name "democracy" which in classical political theory has meant "mob" or majority rule. Further, such a conception of human nature actually begs for an autocracy and more probably, as Thrasymachus suggested, a despot or tyrant. This paradox is especially evident in Hobbes' claim that there is an insatiable and unlimited individual desire for power which ceases only in death and that restless desire, if not checked, would cause the demise of society:

> Competition of Riches, Honour, Command, or other power, enclineth to Contention, Enmity, and War: Because the way of one Competition, to the attaining of his desire, is to kill, subdue, supplant, or repel the other.[109]

---

[109] **Thomas Hobbes, "Of the difference of Manners," Leviathan, ed. C.B. Macpherson (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), 161.**

If this is true, and the desire to dominate is unchangingly embodied in each and every individual, it is clearly antithetical to social or collective order and stability. What equal force or greater power could temper this natural, insatiable, individual-centred power? For a resolution to this volatile condition Hobbes had to concede what is really another kind of power, one which is not as explicitly articulated in realist discourse.[110] He also had to concede that to some degree individuals can be the authors of their own fate; they can variously construct themselves and their social condition. Hobbes reconciled the individual power quandary by stating that individuals will come together and collaborate for their collective good; this would be collectively empowering. This outcome presupposed an equally powerful "natural" impulse or what Hobbes calls "motion" in order to accept the proposed way out. While rational utility is most commonly understood as the focus of Hobbes' solution to domination, it is doubtful that Hobbes thought rational foresight could be simply conjured up by "necessity." Is "necessity" a stronger impulse than "nature"? It is doubtful that dominating individuals would concede power to a collectivity in order to achieve some unknown good (which might not be better than the power they presently exercised). Hobbes' "perpetual" desire for power must be understood as other than the more orthodox realist interpretations allow.

---

[110] See, for example, Hobbes' discussion of "Naturall" or "Originall" Power and "Instrumentall" Power in "Of Power, Worth, Dignity, Honour, and Worthinesse," Leviathan X, 150-160.

Hobbes' cooperation or mutual empowerment does not spontaneously spring from a perpetual desire to dominate. This suggests that there must be a simultaneous perpetual desire for harmony and cooperation. Reason would mediate between cooperation or restraint and domination and Hobbes goes to great lengths to show how reason could be cultivated toward mutually desirable ends.[111] No doubt this implicit feature of Hobbes' thesis needs further elaboration; however this is beyond the scope of the present examination. It is worth noting that in orthodox inter/national political theory, this idea of a natural propensity for peace would be interpreted as idealistic or utopian. In contrast, the prevailing view conceiving of power as domination is considered "realistic" and prudent. Not coincidentally, in international relations, "great" powers[112] have espoused this view as a justification for their imperialist, colonizing and dominating actions; they conceive of themselves as literally existing in an anarchic order, Hobbes' "state of nature." This reading of the latter is somewhat self-serving. Hobbes' state of nature is a metaphorical construct which, like Descartes' conception of fables, was meant to awaken the mind to the fact of human reason and its deployment toward mutually satisfying ends. The prevailing realist interpretation borders on a literal and almost determinist reading of Leviathan, especially the often quoted Chapter 13 which represented conditions in a hypothetical "state of nature."[113]

---

[111] Hobbes, "Of Reason, and Science," Leviathan V, 110-118.

[112] The concept "great," generally used by realists and some liberals, is problematic for a number of reasons. It is not clear that in modern politics "great" means much more than a nation-state possessing the ability to dominate, whether ideologically, economically, militarily or otherwise. In contrast, Marxists and postcolonial scholars use the concepts "centre" and "periphery." See, Richard Peet, ed., An Introduction to Marxist Theories of Underdevelopment (Canberra: The Australian University, 1980) and Philip Kasinitz, "Neo-Marxist Views of the State," Dissent 30 (Summer 1983), 337-346.

This realist construction validates the idea of power/domination and simultaneously speaks to the poverty or "misery" of modern efforts to collaborate in ordering the international community of nations according to "felicity" or the collective good. "Collective good" is fundamentally distorted by an ideology which tautologically validates domination of small states. As later deconstructive analyses of Marx and Mill will illume, this distortion was buttressed by the language of justice: dominating the *non*-European states was for the latters' own good and in the best interest of civilization, modernization and development.

One of the principal reasons for the present poverty of efforts to collaborate to end power as domination is the ideological commitments of "great" powers that want to preserve their dominance by whatever means necessary. This is especially true for the United States. There is something remarkably self-fulfilling about the efforts to preserve dominance: there is an absolute acceptance that individuals in the absence of external restraints will dominate others and, "ipso facto," states in an anarchic order also "must" seek domination. In the national order it is accepted that reason and rules can mediate dominance but not relations between nation-states.

---

[113] See esp. Hobbes' "Of the Naturall Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery," Leviathan XIII, 183-188.

While this view is rarely posited, I would argue that the rejection of rules in modern inter/national relations could be traced to ancient and modern notions of those different from themselves as barbarians, natural slaves, aliens, subhumans, inferior, incapable of mutuality (requires equality) and as strangers to rational rules. It would have required colonial and imperialist states to accept that those state/peoples whom they had dominated, were capable of not only governing themselves (*contra* the so-called "white man's burden"), but also of rationally sharing in collective international relations on an equal basis. No doubt, these ideological pre-commitments systematically influenced how power was used and to what ends or purposes. This necessarily leads us to a critical examination of the relationship between power and ideology.

I.6. Power and Ideology

Ideology can serve to preserve relations of dominance. As such, the study of ideology specifically seeks to illuminate the ways in which meaning sustains such power relations.[114] The concept

---

[114] **John Thompson, Studies in the Theory of Ideology (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), esp. Chapters 3 and 4.**

"ideology" was first coined by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy. He used it to refer to a "radically empirical analysis of the human mind."[115] There are several senses in which the concept ideology is used by political theorists today. First, it is used to connote ideals and abstract speculations or visions.[116] Ideology can be used in a value-neutral sense, simply to mean "an action-oriented system of beliefs capable of explaining the world and of justifying decisions, of limiting and determining alternatives and of creating the most all-embracing and intensive social solidarity possible."[117] Henry Aiken distinguished this meaning of ideology as "a system of ideas, concerning phenomena, especially those of social life; the manner of thinking characteristic of a class or an individual."[118]

Second, there were two senses or usages of the word "ideology" posited in the German Ideology, and one was a nonrational adherence to beliefs.[119] This fact of irrationality alone can justify the rigourous scrutiny and deconstruction undertaken by feminists and/or postcolonial subjects. Further, the nonrational (and sometimes perversely rational) beliefs embodied in ethnocentrism and xenophobia are often the counterside or "justifications" for visiting violence upon many others. In a sense, this conception is related to the first in that a manner of thinking of say a particular class or ethnicity, can be irrational. To this might be added the manner of thinking characteristic of a nation-state (embodied by its ruling elites) or an ethnicity. Thus, for example, Audre Lorde defined what might be called a racist ideology as one which posited "the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over others and thereby the right to dominance."[120] Similarly, sexism might be defined as the nonrational beliefs in the inherent superiority of one gender over another, and thereby the right to control and dominate. As well, a similar logic can be found in heterosexism, classism, ageism and like "justifications" for power/dominance. These beliefs are without objective foundation, as perceptive analyses by Simone de Beauvoir, Frantz Fanon and bell hooks, persons from different subject positions and varied national spaces, have articulated. Such ideologies are instrumental; they exist and give comfort to the ethnicity, gender or class which adheres to them. They also become a source of justification for dominating those who are apparently different and, solely by virtue of this difference can be dominated and even harmed. As Lorde noted, these kinds of beliefs are antithetical to genuine transformation and in fact preserve the status quo in which some dominate and others are subordinated.[121]

---

[115] de Tracy (1754-1836); cited in Henry D. Aiken, The Age of Ideology (New York: New American Library, 1956), 16.

[116] Aiken, The Age of Ideology, 13.

[117] Paul E. Sigmund, The Ideologies of the Developing Nations, 3rd edn. (New York, 1978), 41f; Karl Dietrich Bracher, The Age of Ideologies: A History of Political Thought in the Twentieth Century, trans. Ewald Osers (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 3-4.

[118] Aiken, The Age of Ideology, 14.

[119] Marx and Engels, The Germany Ideology (1845-6), ed. C.J. Arthur (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970), Part I, 47.

---

[120] Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" in Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press), 114-115.

Third and related, Karl Dietrich Bracher argued that ideologies can be the basis of deception and self-deception. Ideologies can operate as a *camera obscura* which represents the world through distorted images produced by unfocused, or inaccurately focused lens so to speak.[122] The representation of reality becomes, to a large extent, an optical illusion. However, given that ideology is partly constituted by language, and that language itself is "real," then ideological representations themselves cannot be exclusively illusionary. For example, Marx argued that the "owning" or "possessing" class was in a state of human self-alienation, blinded by class privilege and the uncritical adherence to ideas which conveniently allowed an existence of obscene wealth and material excess while the non-owning or non-possessing classes lived a wretched and miserable existence.[123] Yet, because the owning class attempted to obscure the fact of gross economic inequality through dissimulation, they need not be completely deceived.

---

[121] Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," Sister Outsider, 110-113.

[122] Thompson, "Language and ideology," 523.

[123] Marx, "Alienation and Social Classes," in The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Tucker, 133; and Marx's replies to Bruno Bauer and Pierre Joseph Proudhon in "The Holy Family: A Critique of Critical Criticism," in L. Easton and K. Guddat, eds. Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 367f.

Fourth, during the Napoleonic Era, the concept was used negatively or perjoratively to connote beliefs which were hostile to Napoleon himself.[124] Today the concept continues to contain this negative element in which ideology connotes difference or the thoughts or system of belief of political "adversaries." Marx and Engels perpetuated this aspect of ideology in the German Ideology. Ideology was identified with the work of anyone who differed from Marx or Engels' revolutionary visions.[125]

Evidently there is a nuanced range in the meaning of ideology, from theories of phenomena objectively articulated to a (subjective) way of thinking. Aiken pointed out that the apparent confusion originating from the different senses is in a way inimical to the concept of ideology. This means it is sometimes difficult to distinguish its use as a mode of thought (something willed, posited), its object, or as with many nineteenth century philosophers, both simultaneously. Yet, despite a prevailing idea of objectivity in science today, and of the idea of thinking objectively, there is an element of subjectivity, sometimes thinly disguised in every question and "object" selected for study, every claim posited and every "understanding" of social phenomena and the relations between individuals, classes or other social formations and even nation-states. What is to be garnered from this is the sense in which ideologies originate out of some kind of subjective but also unexamined commitment, whether nation(alism), class, gender or religion. It is often posited as otherwise. Each of these senses of ideology is evident today, and one of the tasks at hand will be to illuminate the ideological commitments of political actors as well as to show how they coincided with and/or contradicted the "reality" of events between the United States and Nicaragua.

---

[124] Thompson, "Language and ideology," 518.

[125] Aiken, The Age of Ideology, 17.

Throughout this study I will use ideology in primarily two senses. First, in the more "neutral," descriptive sense to connote political beliefs or symbolic practices. In using this conception, I do not seek consciously to distinguish between the various social formations being represented. Further, I use it to describe the fact of commonly held beliefs, say of foreign policymakers or a nation-state; I attempt to assemble and articulate these beliefs in an intelligible manner.[126] Second, I use what Thompson called a "critical conception" of ideology, namely a conception which was part of the "process of sustaining asymmetrical relations of power -- that is, to the process of maintaining domination."[127] In effect, this critical conception has its roots in the self-defined *ideologues* of the French Enlightenment and the negative (pejorative) connotation placed upon them and their beliefs by Napoleon in order to defend and preserve the prevailing order and relations of power/dominance.

---

[126] **See, Thompson, "Language and ideology," 518.**

[127] **Thompson, "Language and ideology," 518.**

As part of this second usage, it will be important to articulate the relationship between ideology, power and the production and circulation of meaning. It will be shown that "meaning," how it is mobilized and deployed, is related to language and, hence, the examination of meaning necessarily entails an analysis of language.[128] There are three broad areas concerning meaning which I will mention here and elaborate more fully throughout this study. First, meaning can be mobilized through "discourse," that is, linguistic and non-verbal expressions, the flow of conversation, texts and like forms. The second area recognizes that meaning is not a stable property of a linguistic product; it is constitutive. As I have argued, the meaning of certain expressions in international politics cannot be understood without a critical examination of history and the social and material contexts in which they are produced.[129] Finally, the third area concedes that to understand meaning, it is not sufficient to examine terms of syntax, or grammar. The production of meaning may be mediated or influenced by the structure of argumentation, narration, grammar or other. Thus, the construction of meaning is made possible by complex elements and, in reconstructing this production, it always becomes necessary to

---

[128] Thompson, "Language and ideology," 520. Subsequent analysis draws upon this discussion in Thompson.

[129] For an excellent analysis: Noam Chomsky, "Political discourse and the propaganda system," Language and Politics, ed. C.P. Otero (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988).

interpret.[130]

I.7. History, Power and Ideology/Knowledge

Descartes likened history to fables and, hence, as not analagous to that which might produce certain knowledge. However, this is not necessarily the case. Any proposition formulated makes sense only in the context of the worldview, the ideology, which shapes subsequent interpretations. Thus propositions, including those received from the annals of history, require reasonable, logical, analytic, and empirical e/valuations. Further, and related, is the necessity of inductive logic which, according to Alfred North Whitehead, "presupposes metaphysics."[131] By this he meant that the foundation of induction was "an antecedent rationalism." It is impossible to "have a rational justification for your appeal to history till your metaphysics has assured you that there *is* a history to appeal to."[132] On this reading, even the most rational and respectful lessons from history presupposed that there is such a thing as history and since the latter cannot be proven in any indubitable sense, the idea of its existence must be taken on faith or perhaps more accurately, what Foucault (perjoratively) termed metaphysical presence. As I have argued, Derrida did not conceive of metaphysics in the same way as Foucault or various other postmodernists. Rather, metaphysics merely affirmed the need for a radical contestation of concepts and metanarratives.[133]

---

[130] Thompson, "Language and ideology," 519-520.

[131] Hobbes, Elements of Law, Natural and Politic, Part I, chap. 8, ed., Frederick Toonies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1640], 1928).

[132] Munz, "What's Postmodern, Anyway?," 338.

Whitehead went on to state that "conjectures as to the future presupposes some basis of knowledge that there *is* a future already subjected to some determination."[134] Without an understanding of these ideas, drawing propositions from history and deploying an inductive logic makes no sense. Given the contested nature of the meaning and uses of history in the construction of international political theory, it seems useful to follow Waltz' advice to pose central questions and systematically order the different answers possible and critically assess their plausibility.[135] Indubitably, some efforts to posit different answers will be marred by the absence of judicious assessments of worldviews which differ from those of the political theorist. A healthy scepticism and radical critique can produce more or less plausible interpretations. It is from such a place that the present effort to comprehend the mis/use of history, historical experiences, or at least the representation of history and experiences, is launched.

---

[133] For a defense of the rational basis of metaphysics, see Michael Dummett, The Logical Basis of Metaphysics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), esp. Chaps. 4-7. Dummett argued that a systematic, coherent and generally intelligible account of meaning can be ascertained around semantic concepts such as truth, reference and assertion. In effect, against postmodernists' nihilism of reference.

[134] Eagleton, Literary Theory, 142.

[135] Waltz, "Political Philosophy," 62.

The present relations of inequality between nation-states, what I call neocolonialism, sometimes masquerading as postcolonialism, are made possible partly by a rabid ahistoricism. Consequently, it will be a central feature of this study, as Bryan D. Palmer argued in his enquiry, to "uncover the ahistorical, prettyifying ways in which ideas and values are manipulated to mask essential relations of inequality, be they lived out between nations or individuals embedded in long-established socioeconomic relations."[136] It will be shown that ideas about "manifest destiny" and political, economic and moral superiority undergirded United States imperialism. Such ideas masked the fundamentally anti-freedom impulse of colonizers and imperialists. It also masked the general condition of economic exploitation which should not be overlooked because of individual benefits. In more recent times, the "Cold" War (depending on positionality and how it was experienced) has been the ideological pretext of European powers for denying Third World states the pursuits of non-alignment and national self-determination, however that was self-defined.

---

[136] Palmer, "Historical Materialism," Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 61.

The great disparities which have emerged throughout history are preserved because of the absence of consciousness: a consciousness of history, of human agency, and particularly of the asymmetrical structure of social and material relations. It is possible because of historical amnesia or the acceptance of what Friedrich Hegel somewhat fatalistically suggested in Reason in History: "[I]n the turmoil of world affairs no universal principle, no memory of similar conditions in the past can help us--a vague memory has no power against the vitality and freedom of the present."[137] This is, perhaps, an overstatement by Hegel. It calls into question the very idea of "experience" and "maturity" (or cumulative learning) but also "knowledge" as such, since the latter is presumed to be more than present information and learning. Perhaps the proper emphasis ought to be placed upon the idea of "vague memory" and the need to sharpen our knowledge and understanding of the past in order to act with "experience," meaning in light of a consciousness of the collective history. Only if learning and consciousness are possible, if historical amnesia can be overcome, is freedom as Hegel understood it developing over Time, possible.[138]

Hegel suggested that "[T]wo things must be distinguished in consciousness, first *that* I know and, secondly, *what* I know."[139] Consciousness, then, develops through history and society. Further, where for Hegel this understanding was primarily articulated in an idealistic form, Marxists such as George Lukacs rightly pointed out, in the development of "self-consciousness for the working class--revolutionary praxis is involved, and ultimately a new society, world, or stage in human history."[140] Moreover, in rejecting a mechanical, causal approach to history, Lukacs wrote that dialectical necessity is not the same thing as causal necessity and, furthermore, "[I]n addition to the mere contradictions--the automatic product of capitalism--a *new* element is required: the consciousness of the proletariat must become deed."[141]

---

[137] Hegel, Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History, trans. Robert S. Hartman (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1953), 8.

[138] Hegel, Reason in History, 22-34.

In "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," Marx noted that "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great, historical facts and personages occur, as it were twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce."[142] The first time, one might genuinely admit error, a great lack of foresight; however, the second time there is no excuse and to claim otherwise is farcical. Arguably in matters of historical fact and personage, it is not only the "great" in the form of the desirable which is repeated, but also in the form of the tyrannical, the brutal and oppressive, sometimes so often they are taken as "normal," as "inevitable" even. Yet it is dubious to claim that such violent repetition is causal necessity, an inevitability; that, in fact, there is no such thing as human agency and responsibility. To the contrary, Marx rightly argued that human beings do make their own history; however it is not an exact replica, a one-to-one correlation with what they desire because they must take some events and facts as they occur.[143]

---

[139] Hegel, Reason in History, 23.

[140] Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness (1923), cited in Cornel West, The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991), 151.

[141] Lukacs quoted in West, The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought, 150.

[142] Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire," in The Marxist Reader, ed. Emile Burns (New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 116.

Sometimes, the traditions of the past, the dead, can weigh heavily on the brains of the living and thereby impede the ability to act freely. At the moment of transformation, of revolutionizing themselves and social relations and institutions, "something entirely new" occurs. Sometimes new agents of change become anxious (sometimes reactionary), and they turn to the past for inspiration, for names, slogans and images, what Marx called the "time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language."[144] Or, as with postmodernists, they reject everything of the past; the names, images, language, and in the process, historical consciousness are lost and historical amnesia is reborn, this time as farce. Nevertheless, the intent of the revolutionaries who turn to the past is not necessarily to relive the tragedy of the past or to parody the previous great historical moments. Rather, "[T]he awakening of the dead in those revolutions therefore served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old; of magnifying the given tasks in imagination, not of fleeing back from the solution in reality; of finding once more the spirit of revolution, not of making the ghosts walk again."[145] Marx went on to state that the social revolution can only draw on the poetry of the future, not that of the past.

---

[143] Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire," 116.

[144] Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire," 117.

A new beginning, an awakening as Marx put it, is improbable without first stripping the present off the superstition, myths, and fiction, which obscure the contemporary social and material relations which need transformation in order to create a different kind of future. This, in part, is where Marxists take their departure from postmodernists who, in fact, produce new myths, fictions, parodies, jokes and naively believe that these will not be appropriated in the interests of preserving the status quo. If Hegel's claim in Reason and History is correct, the memory of the past is too faint, too vague and no comparison with the vitality of the present. This presents a paradox. A vague memory has no power to foster consciousness and a spirited resistance to capitalist exploitation and to asymmetrical relations of power, to structural inequities. An incubus on the brain can weigh down the vitality of liberatory acts, can obscure revolutionary potentials which foster hope and concrete

---

[145] **Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire," 118.**

(that is, other than text) activities for change. Yet, taken together, the observations of Marx and Hegel point to the recognition that history is relevant to consciousness and its study is vital to circumventing farce. Thus, vagueness or ignorance must be supplanted by a consciousness borne and constructed upon historical knowledge and not displaced, suspended, deferred, by ideological obscurations. These reflections lead me to a discussion of propaganda in international politics.

I.8. Ideology and Propaganda

Arguably, a significant component of the hostilities between the United States and Nicaragua, and the Carter and Reagan Administration and the *Sandinistas*, was in the area of words and ideas. Ideologies were set to script and with periodic improvisations, they received frequent play and replay in the 'theatre' of international affairs. The substance of the script was an inseparable admixture of truths and half-truths, lies, myths, distortions and exaggerations, all deployed in a seemingly well-rehearsed propaganda campaign. Propaganda is generally understood as the "process involving a communicator whose intention is to *change the attitudes, opinions, and behavior* of a target population using spoken, written, and behavioral symbols and employing media."[146]

---

[146] Theodore A. Couloumbis and James H. Wolfe, Introduction to International Relations: Power and Justice (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:

In the arena of international political ideologies, three types are generally deployed. First, "white" propaganda generally connotes cooperation and educative information. Second, "gray" propaganda connotes a deterioration in the diplomatic relationship between two states and a deliberate effort to "differentiate the 'good people' from the 'bad government' of the state" using exaggeration, falsehoods and combative language.[147] Finally, "black" propaganda or disinformation connotes the outbreak of actual hostilities and the deployment of psychological warfare. Given the fact that the use of "black" to convey conflict and "white" to convey cooperation is not innocent of the history of racial prejudice, "disinformation" will be used in this study. In addition to high level government officials, the war of words is carried out by the United States Information Agency (USIA) which is responsible for the radio programs Voice of America and Radio Free Europe.[148] Increasingly, psychological warfare, entailing simplistic dualisms in which the "enemy" is painted as "bad" or "evil" or an aberration, precedes actual armed hostilities. Today, the distinguishable transition between "white" and "gray" propaganda and disinformation, and what that transition

---

Prentice-Hall, 1991), 171; and K.J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 221.

[147] Couloumbis and Wolfe, Introduction to International Relations, 172.

[148] Couloumbis and Wolfe, Introduction to International Relations, 172.

meant, has become quite blurred.

Chomsky perceptively illuminates the fact that an *a priori* ideological commitment often results in the existence of two mutually exclusive definitions of the same phenomenon. Thus, "what is called 'indoctrination' or 'propaganda' when it is conducted by official enemies" becomes "'education,' 'moral instruction' or 'character building,' when we do it."[149] Chomsky sees this ideological distinction as a mechanism of control especially in ostensibly "open democratic societies." One of its consequences is that "it effectively blocks any understanding of what is happening in the world." This mis/use of "indoctrination" and "moral instruction" renders both useful for accurately representing and/or predicting what is happening in material reality. What "our" side does is, of course, considered education; what the "enemy" or "their" side does is indoctrination. The categorizations are based on preconceived ideological commitments which do not attempt to find validity in material reality. In fact, this diction is contrary to critical reasoning, it is a contra/diction, nonsensical in that it first requires the belief that indoctrination is *different from* education or moral instruction and second, that nevertheless if "we" or "our" side engages in indoctrination it is the *same as* moral instruction.

---

[149] Chomsky, "The Manufacture of Consent," (120-136) in The Chomsky Reader: Noam Chomsky, ed. James Peck (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 124.

This is a "sub" version or sub/version of meaning and confounds the efforts to identify, name and/or represent international political phenomena. This subversion of meaning has occurred on at least two levels. First, in the vein of Chomsky, the diction or word choices themselves have come to be meaningless in the original sense. The diction does not reasonably depict the reality of a state deemed either "us" or "them." The diction has a new meaning and it is perhaps best to understand it as an indication of ideological differences, and no more. Second, the process or evolution of the political relations such words were originally meant to represent is no longer operative and, in fact, may never have been operative other than as an idea. Thus, for example, it is very probable that diplomatic relations always have existed alongside disinformation. From this exploration, I now shift to a practico-moral reflection upon establishing principles of justice as a rational guide to, at least, interrogating the defensibility of the resort to arms.

Those who bother to reflect upon questions of justice as if they matter are dismissed as idealists who do not understand that war is "necessarily" nasty, brutish and ugly. In contrast, realists are those who represent the world as it is and the understanding of what "is" sometimes borders on fatalism. Thus, in war, wanton destruction, systematic rape and degradation of women and children somehow become an inevitable and hence fatalistic representation of "reality" and, in particular, the reality of war.[150] Yet if this is reality, then very probably it cannot be changed; if it can be changed, then it cannot simultaneously be a pre/determined "reality." Ironically, if it is a reality which cannot be changed, then it has something to say about what can be expected in conditions of peace, namely the same. Historically, what has happened to women, children, the elderly (the generally less powerful), has been given scant attention or readily dismissed as inevitable "casualties of war." It also has been the case that these powerless sectors of society have constituted the majority of so-called inevitable casualties of war. The important questions about armed hostilities often are not seen to be related to the consequences for these average citizens. Apparently, in international politics, the important and proper questions are about the consequences for regional power, geostrategic alliances and the preservation of economic dominance. In this sense, the victor or the powerful not only determines what will count as knowledge about a particular armed hostility, but also what is to be considered valuable, including in the area of human life.[151] What is considered valuable is evident in the negative sense in what has been considered expendable.

---

[150] See, for e.g., the cover-ups of the systematic rape of girls and women and torture in *Contra* prison camps in Honduras during the *Contra*/revolution in Sam Dillon's Commandos: The CIA and Nicaragua's Contra Rebels (N.Y.: Henry Holt and Company, 1991), esp. 35-7, 196-204, 363-64.

[151] This relationship between power, ideology and knowledge is well articulated in the work of Noam Chomsky including his On Power and Ideology: The Managua Lectures (Boston: South End Press, 1987) and Turning the Tide: The U.S. and Latin America (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987).

To the extent that certain consequences of war are not discussed, and remain invisible in the literature, it can be assumed that they are not considered important or valuable by the powerful/victor or by those who seek to represent those events. Although the vanquished and/or their sympathizers might narrate alternative representations of armed hostilities, they are not usually given the same legitimacy. This is as much related to the fact that the *Sandinistas*, for example, were considered the vanquished as it was to do with the fact that Nicaragua is not considered a "significant" or "dominant" actor in international politics. It should be noted that this distinction is not about truth or good analyses or representations; it is about power as domination and its use to produce what becomes the orthodox interpretation and the definitive meaning. What the powerful say can and has been confused as truth or more worthy of note. In this sense, power and what counts as valuable knowledge in international politics are inextricably connected.

There is also a psychological dimension related to knowledge and what people who have emerged from a condition of war want to know. In the aftermath and euphoria of victory, few can stomach the realization that the justifications given in defense of war and the official descriptions of the effects of the war, were no more than illusions to manufacture consent and to sustain popular support for the war.[152] Simone de Beauvoir put it aptly when she argued that "to refuse to countenance a war that dares not speak its true name...you can no longer mumble the old excuse, 'We didn't know'; and now that you do know, can you continue to feign ignorance, or content yourselves with mere token utterances of horrified sympathy?"[153] The knowledge of the unspeakable requires more than sympathy, it requires redress and constructive actions to circumvent the occurrence of horror. In this thesis, in addition to the "official" or dominant story, particular attention will be paid to stories which might otherwise be rendered invisible. An effort will be made to represent or, at least articulate, the experiences of Jews, indigenous peoples and/or ethnic minorities within Nicaragua; the experiences of those who, too often, are considered expendable in theory and praxis.

In the next section, I want to reflect upon the question of justice as it relates to war. In order to construct a conception of justice which avoids Thrasymachus' political cynicism, I visit the just war tradition. This is useful in order to suggest some initial, (and yes, contestable), possibilities for rationally assigning moral culpability in wars despite the many uncertainties and ambiguities. Insofar as "combatants," that is those who chose to resort to war (or actively to participate), make choices, then they reasonably can be held responsible.

---

[152] For a discussion of this idea of manufacturing consent, see Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media (New York: Pantheon, 1988).

[153] de Beauvoir, cited in Women on War: Essential Voices for the Nuclear Age, ed., Daniela Gioseffi (Toronto: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1988), 181.

I.7. Just Wars and Interventions

The careful examination of questions concerning just war is facilitated by criteria which have evolved since as early as the Fourth Century with the attempts of St. Augustine of Hippo to reconcile Christian love with the butchery of battlefield combat. He argued that war should only be waged as a "necessity" to ensure that at its end, people would live in peace and minimally enjoy the security of personhood. Combat for St. Augustine, was justified in the defense of Christian society and for the purpose of peace and stability. In this case, as with others, what is important to reflect upon is the reasons and whether either the means or the ends are defensible. Thus, for example, if one objected to Christianity or even a theocracy generally, then the latter could not be drawn upon as a justification. In fact, it might be used to justify war against religious societies. In any event, in the sixteenth century Sir Thomas More, the Lord Chancellor under King Henry VIII and Francisco de Vitoria, a Dominican theologian, elaborated the just war doctrine.[154] They argued that for the misery and bloodbath of war to be justified, every effort must have been exerted to reach a diplomatic solution. War was a last resort, an admission of the failure of diplomacy. It was the extension of the political will from non-violence to violence. Further, it was thought that a just war only could be waged by a competent, legitimate political authority with "real," that is, not fabricated, and clearly stated objectives.

---

[154] See for e.g. de Victoria, The Spanish Conception of International Law and Sanction, ed. James B. Scott (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1934); and More, Sir Thomas More, ed. Ernest Edwin Reynolds (London: Longman's, Green,

Just wars did not originate from imagined or manufactured objectives. Moreover, there had to be some reasonable probability of success. Several consequentialist justifications undergirded the notion of success. There was an outright rejection of acts of sheer lunacy and imprudence, including acts which might lead to failure. The probability of victory, that is the successful realization of objectives, had to be significant. Finally, the anticipated victory had to outweigh the costs of war measured in terms of human suffering and death. Non-combatants or civilians could not be involved deliberately in the carnage.

In the Middle Ages the doctrine was further elaborated by St. Thomas Aquinas who claimed that violations against Natural Law and Divine Law could justify overthrowing a government and that, in fact, violations of Divine Law made it obligatory. Although the doctrine has its roots in Christian theology, both non-secular and secular theorists have sought to justify or condemn particular resorts to war. By the time of the French Revolution, there was growing

---

1975).

acceptance for the view that the destruction of an unpopular government was defensible and in fact just.[155] Thomas Paine defended the toppling of a government if it was a tyranny, of which hereditary monarchies were considered the worst. Similarly, Thomas Jefferson wrote that "[A] little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical."[156] This might be interpreted as suggesting that rebellions were "necessary" to the extent that tyrannies arise; rebellions are essential to ensure freedom and to destroy domination.

The criteria of just war are directly related to the nature of the regime against which arms are taken up, suggesting it must first be in existence before it can be properly judged. This criterion would make preemptory armed hostilities and interventions somewhat problematic. Second, the regime must govern in a manner which finds disfavour with the populace before it can be justifiably toppled. This speaks more directly to internal factors as opposed to international justifications for intervention, although the two sets of justifications are not mutually exclusive. In the case of Nicaragua, the resort to war was simultaneously defended on grounds drawing upon domestic factors, namely democracy, freedom and human rights and grounds which had an international dimension, namely regional security. In the case of Nicaragua, it will be important to differentiate, to the extent possible, manufactured truths upon which uninformed political consent may have been obtained.

---

[155] Geoffrey R. Martin, "The Immorality of the Contras' Resort to War: The Case of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force," Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies 25 (1988), 74.

[156] Jefferson, Letter to James Madison (January 30, 1787); cited in Thomas H. Greene, Comparative Revolutionary Movements: Search For Theory and Justice, 3rd edn. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990), vii.

In Just and Unjust Wars, Michael Walzer rightly argues that international interventions can threaten the sovereign integrity of invaded states such that they undermine the notion of independence and the principle that interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state is generally unacceptable. When interventions do occur, they must be *justified* and in this respect, the burden of proof is on the state that wants to violate the principle of non-interference.[157] In the case of Nicaragua, there were a number of overlapping justifications for the resort to arms by both the *Contras* and the Reagan Administration. To a large extent, the domestic factors were most emphasized as evident in the claims that it was a "civil war" and that the *Contras* were "freedom fighters" struggling against a tyrannical regime. Thus, the internal factors which may be implicated in the resort to arms will be assessed critically, keeping in mind the adage by liberals and Marxists alike that the only people who can win and eventually sustain their freedom are those who are unfree, who are conscious of their condition and prepared to alter the situation.

John Stuart Mill opposed institutions established by foreign regimes as unnecessarily intrusive and antithetical to the creation of a community of self-determining nation-states.[158] Mill believed that self-determination was a higher and more inclusive good than political freedom; the idea of self-determination incorporates both institutions and process by which they are created. If institutions and the process of arriving at them (for example, elections) were externally imposed, this was thought to undermine the very nature of self-determination. According to Mill "[I]t is during an arduous struggle to become free by their own efforts that these virtues [for maintaining freedom] have the best chance of springing up."[159]

---

[157] **Walzer, "Interventions," Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1977), 86.**

Ironically, this was the position of Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Father Miguel D'Escoto Brockman and Interior Minister Tomas Borge Martínez. It is also ironic that this view directly contradicted the view of Ronald Reagan and his then Secretary of State George Shultz who consistently maintained that "the foundation stones of American society" have been tried and proven and therefore could be advocated for other societies. As Walzer aptly points out, the view that a people must win their own freedom is also compatible with the Marxist maxim that "[T]he liberation of the working class can come only through the workers themselves."[160] As *Commandante* Dora María

---

[158] Mill, On Liberty (1859); cited in Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, 87.

[159] Mill, in Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, 87; and Mill, "A Few Words on Non-Intervention" Dissertations and Discussions (New York, 1873), III, 238-63.

[160] Walzer, 88; and Irving Howe, ed., The Basic Writings of

Tellez put it, a people cannot be forced to love democracy; a people cannot be forced to be free. For her, these things cannot be taught in schools, they are not taught in the Churches, they must be learned, in the struggle for Humanity itself.

There are problems with both the Millian and Marxian view, including determining what, if anything, is needed for a people to be deemed free in the self-determining sense. The rise of military governments and the use of excessive force to put down internal rebellions and stifle dissent presents a problem for interpreting whether a people are complacent with their lot or shackled by tyranny. How can it be known whether a people are resigned to and "coping" with their wretched lot (and prefer it) as United Nations Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick argued, or whether the fear fostered under repressive regimes makes it improbable that people "realistically" can contemplate freedom? The case of apartheid South Africa is perhaps one of the clearest examples in history. In South Africa, a white minority of three million can control a majority of twenty-seven million because the white minority is excessively armed, economically privileged vis-a-vis the black majority, and because there is really no political will among powerful states to lend adequate support to the black majority. Yet, should the blacks "cope" as Kirkpatrick would have it or should they struggle for freedom, thereby creating uncertainty, disorder and possibly chaos?

Trotsky (New York, 1963), 397.

The very fact that blacks struggle despite the odds undermines the viability of Kirkpatrick's thesis which is a negation of freedom and self-determination in the name or interest of order. Throughout the 1980s, the case of South Africa also led to inevitable comparisons with Nicaragua where the claim of tyranny was rigourously disputed but *Contra* intervention occurred ostensibly in the interest of freedom and democracy. The contra/diction necessarily leads to questions and, perhaps, skepticism about what actually undergirds the resort to arms and why, in certain cases such as South Africa, there remained indeterminancy. Under the notion of "constructive engagement," there was an avoidance of rationally assessing the moral consequences of supporting a regime engaged in institutional segregation and systematically asymmetrical relations which disadvantaged the various African groups (27 million) and favoured the various European-origin white groups (about 3 million).

On the ideological front, there is at least one possible answer for intransigence, at least in the area of promoting self-determination for a peoples or a nation. Walzer suggests that one possible reason for non-intervention might be the assumption that a people were not capable of governing themselves. This view harkens back to the ideas of the "white man's burden" which undergirded European colonizers' refusal to grant self-government or independence to many colonized states until the 1950s and 1960s although some colonies received independence earlier. When independence was granted, it was often because the colonized finally resorted to violence to force the colonizers' hands. This was especially the case with British and Portuguese colonies in Africa. Mill, as did Marx, thought that some peoples were backwards, barbarians, childish, incompetent and hence had no right to self-determination.[161] Mill wrote that "[B]arbarians have no rights as a *nation*" and hence the community of nations are not obligated to recognize any right to non-interference. So-called "barbarians" have no such rights since they are reserved for "civilized" peoples and nations and, of course, the definition of "civilized" was usually synonymous with successful colonizers, imperialists and Europeans. From the point of view of the colonizer, interference was considered to be in the best interests of "backward" nation-states.[162]

Friedrich Engels expressed a similar sentiment in 1848 when he wrote to Karl Marx that "[I]t is in the interests of its own development that henceforth Mexico should be placed under the tutelage of the United States."[163] Likewise Marx, in a letter to Engels, wrote that "[M]exican guerrilla warfare is a caricature of the Spanish warfare" and while the Mexicans possessed the same traits as the Spanish -- boastfulness, grandiloquence and quixoticism, they did not possess the substance of the Spanish.[164] Thus, United States imperialism and ethnocentrism was considered to be in the best interests of Mexico. In addition to his writings on Latin America, Marx's writings on "The British Rule in India" (1853) also suggest that he saw British imperialism and colonization as a means of "civilizing" a backward nation. No doubt ignorance of the peoples and conditions of Latin America and India undergirded such truly unfounded pronouncements. As was characteristic of the time, European ignorance of other civilizations was interpreted as the Other(s)' "lack," as opposed to the absence of knowledge or more accurately, the ignorance of Europeans on such matters. This kind of European ethnocentrism informed, and continues to inform, the sense of superiority of scholars from the Marxist, liberal and realist traditions in international politics. Ethnocentrism hindered Europeans' efforts to understand Other civilizations, peoples and realities. This fact has been brilliantly illuminated by former "colonial (objects) subjects" including in Frantz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth and Black Skin, White Masks, and Che Guevara's Guerrilla Warfare.[165]

---

[161] See, for e.g. Shlomo Avineri, ed., Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization (New York, 1969) and Marx's "Bolivar y Ponte" in George Ripley and Charles A. Dana, eds., The New American Cyclopedia (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1858), III, 441-446.

[162] Mill, cited in Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, 89.

[163] In his letter to Marx, Engel further claimed that "[I]n America we have witnessed the conquest of Mexico, and we are happy about it." "On the War Between Mexico and the United States" (1847); in Luis E. Aguilar, ed. Marxism in Latin America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 66-67.

Walzer correctly argues that the nineteenth century notion of civilized and barbaric states should have no merit in today's world. Yet, he is perhaps too optimistic. It does seem probable that economic and cultural imperialism, racism/ethnocentrism and especially xenophobia along with like-minded notions of superiority (and its counterside, hatred), do inform judgements about what can be done vis-a-vis certain nation-states and peoples. As will be discussed in Chapter IV, the Reagan Administration thought it could knock off "little brown peoples" cheaply, and not because they were "important" or powerful in the sense of being able to dominate.[166] The disdain for the idea of equal, self-determining nations is evident in the view of Reagan Administration policymakers who thought that defeating the *Sandinistas* would prove a point to a powerful nation-state, namely the Soviet Union. Nicaragua was instrumental, a means to an end, and hence not considered equal.

---

[164] Marx's Letter to Engels dated December 2, 1847; in Marxism in Latin America, ed. Aquilar, 67.

[165] Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1967); Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1963); and Guevara, Guerrilla Warfare (New York: Monthly Review, 1961).

Mill also had specific insights for internal conflicts which can help in assessing the decision(s) to resort to war in Nicaragua and the role of foreign intervention. The Reagan Administration claimed there was a civil war in Nicaragua. Several arguments will be advanced to show why this conceptualization was problematic and should be rejected in favour of counterrevolution, and more specifically, *Contra*/revolution. Mill argued that if a state has disintegrated into a civil war, the military interference of external actors will not serve the cause of self-determination. Walzer in fact argues that in civil wars non-military intervention and strict neutrality should be obligatory.[167] Why? Interference serves to determine the outcome. If self-determination is the aim, then interference undermines that possibility. Intervention grants superiority and victory to the side which domestic forces may not have chosen. Hence, it results in a foreign imposition which might become the source of resentment for peoples as opposed to something they might be willing to fight to preserve.[168] If a party in an internal conflict begs for external help in order to impose its will, it hardly can claim popular support. If a foreign state is begged for assistance to render another state's citizens obedient, then neither the asking state nor the helping state can be said to be acting in the interests of self- determination.[169] Under what grounds, then, can interventions be justified?

---

[166] R. Matthews, "The CIA's War," NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August, 1986).

Walzer gives four justifications in defense of interventions and these are as good as any. First, states are justified in intervening to stop actions which "shock the moral conscience of mankind." To this might be added the caveat that in the final analysis, it is political leaders whose consciences must be piqued such that they cannot choose other than "humanitarian action." The emphasis on

---

[167] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 96.

[168] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 96-97, drawing on Montague Bernard, "On the Principle of Non-Intervention" (Oxford, 1860), 21.

[169] Bernard, "On the Principle of Non-Intervention," 16.

"choice" is meant to highlight the idea of individual accountability which is often overlooked in analyses of "powerful states" as opposed to decision-makers within those states. Second, states are justified in intervening on behalf of internal actors who had *a priori* proved their domestic popularity and legitimacy. Interventions should not be made on behalf of actors who have little to no domestic support. Third, interventions can follow the cue taken by another state as a means of buttressing the initial intervener's power. Finally, states are justified in intervening in those cases where there is a massacre or where people are threatened with the same.[170] One of the most horrible and powerful modern examples of this was the holocaust which, perhaps not coincidentally, the Reagan Administration re/called to memory as a way of justifying its support for intervention in the internal affairs of the Nicaraguan state. The analogy of the *Sandinista* regime to the Third Reich begs for deconstruction.

Alternately stated, just war criteria include: (a) level of popular support; (b) level of government support; (c) existence of a political programme; (d) criterion of last resort; (e) discriminating use of force; (f) level of foreign involvement; and (g) some fair chance of success.[171] As for guerrilla warfare, it differs in tactics but in some sense, guerrillas can choose their targets more deliberately. In both the case of conventional warfare and guerrilla warfare, however, choice of targets is made by human agents. To the extent that the choice is to visit gratuitous violence upon non-combatants such wars must be considered unjust and never should be defended.

---

[170] Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, 106-108.

[171] Martin, "The Immorality of the Contras' Resort to War," 71-87; and Donald Secrest and Gregory C. Brunk, "Moral Justifications for Resort to War with Nicaragua: The Attitudes of Three American Elite Groups," The Western Political Quarterly, 44, 3

In sum, considering the justice of war and any form of armed hostilities is important for three reasons. First, it foregrounds the fact that choices are made and responsibility can be assigned based on reasonable criteria. Second, just war criteria are useful for assigning culpability to, and for seeking redress for, the relevant political-military actors, according to traditional dualistic distinctions. Or more accurately given the focus of postmodern criticism of this simplistic dualistic conceptualization, these seven criteria provide the basis for at least challenging the prevailing view that villains can be readily and neatly illuminated. Minimally such criteria can identify whether there is actually any significant difference between those called "villain" or "enemy" and those represented as the "vindicated" or "friends." It seems reasonable to assume that there will be discernable degrees of moral culpability. Third, our knowledge of history should include other than the dominant or "official" stories. In any given conflict, there are various recollections and representations of what occurred and it is improbable that the powerful/victor or the vanquished would

---

(September 1991), 541-559.

represent themselves unfavourably. A careful analysis should seriously examine alternative views for their reasoned defensibility. The just war criteria should act as a subtext which informs the critical examination of any war, revolution or counterrevolution. These criteria will inform this critical examination of the *Contra*/revolution.

There are six chapters which follow. Chapter Two explores the history and ideology of United States imperialism and its multiple global interventions, especially as the subsequent pattern produced relates to Nicaragua. The third and fourth chapters continue the examination of ideas and the interplay of power and ideology through foreign policymakers in the Carter and Reagan Administrations and also within the Somoza government and among the *Sandinista* revolutionary guerrillas. Chapter Three exposes the ambivalence and outright support Carter displayed toward the Somoza dictatorship, his constant deferral of human rights, and ultimately the betrayal of the principle of self-determination when he authorized the subversion of the *Sandinistas*. Chapter Four focusses on the Reagan Administration and its virtual obsession with supporting the *Contras* and undermining the *Sandinista* government. I examine the Reagan doctrine and its ascendancy as ideological pre/text for interventions, including in Nicaragua, and how this was variously supported by covert aid from the Central Intelligence Agency, Israel, Argentina and Saudi Arabia, among others. Chapter Five focusses upon disinformation and the role of ideology and "planned hegemony" in creating and/or exacerbating *fragmentations* among complex identities within Nicaragua: the indigenous and ethnic population and Jews.

Chapters Six and Seven are intended to be differently-focused. The other chapters are primarily deconstructive and attempt to illuminate prevailing myths and lies and how they mask long-standing structural inequalities. The sixth chapter specifically attempts to counter the effects of disinformation and cultural "ignorance" by conceptualizing liberation specifically for indigenous peoples and Africans of the slave diaspora. This focus on liberation is extended to Chapter Seven where I draw upon the conceptualization in Chapter Six to develop various alternative ethnohistorical knowledges of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast: Sumu, Rama and Miskito "Indians"; Garifuna or Black Caribs, Creoles and Mestizos. In effect, Chapters Five through Seven attempt to transgress the dominant and received view of the Nicaraguan Revolution and the *Contra*/revolution, and the nature of stories represented in the dominant discourse between the Reagan Administration and the *Sandinistas* on the one hand, and the *Sandinistas* and the Miskitos, on the other hand.

"On the Pulse of Morning"

Each of you, descendant of some passed
On traveller, has been paid for.
You, who gave me my first name, you,
Pawnee, Apache, Seneca, you
Cherokee Nation, who rested with me, then
Forced on bloody feet,
Left me to the employment of
Other seekers--desperate for gain,
Starving for gold.
You, the Turk, the Swede, the German,
   the Eskimo, the Scot,
You the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Kru,
   bought,
Sold, stolen, arriving on a nightmare
Praying for a dream.
Here, root yourselves besides me.
I am that Tree planted by the River,
Which will not be moved.
I, the Rock, I, the River, I, the Tree
I am yours -- your passages have been
   paid.
Lift up your faces, you have a piercing
   need
For this bright morning dawning for
   you.
History, despite its wrenching pain,
Cannot be unlived, but if faced
With courage, need not be lived again.
Lift up your eyes upon
The day breaking for you.
Give birth again
To the dream.
Women, children, men.
Take it into the palms of your hands,
Mould it into the shape of your most
Private need. Sculpt it into
The image of your most public self.
Lift up your hearts
Each new hour holds new chances
For new beginnings.
Do not be wedded forever
To fear, yoked eternally
To brutishness.
The horizon leans forward,
Offering you space to place new steps of
   change.

Maya Angelou
Guardian Weekly (January 31, 1993).

Chapter II

Imperialism and Counter-Revolutions: The United States in a Funhouse Mirror

> **All philosophers share this common error: they proceed from contemporary man and think they can reach their goal through an analysis of this man...Lack of a historical sense is the original error of all philosophers...**
>
> **Friedrich Nietzsche**
> *"Human All-Too-Human," [2].*

> The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating.
>
> Karl Marx
> *"Theses on Feuerbach," [3].*

II.1. Introduction

In Reason in History, Georg W.F. Hegel wrote that "[O]ne often advises rulers, statesmen, and peoples to learn from the experiences of history."[1] However, despite this sensible advice, Hegel added that "what experience and history teach is that peoples and governments have never yet learned from history, let alone acted according to its lessons." Is it truly the case that there is no learning curve, that every generation of women, men and children

---

[1] Hegel, Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History, trans. Robert S. Hartman (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, [1837] 1953), 8.

inevitably will ignore history and its potential "lessons" and consequently will repeat avoidable mistakes of the past; and that present generations and subsequent generations will not learn at least from the mistakes of others? If this is true, then it does not say much for human reason and potential. Perhaps Hegel stated the position too rigidly. It might be more accurate to argue that in fact many "lessons" have been learned from history, including Hegel's own observation. The reason why it might appear as though nothing has been learned is because the "lessons" have been moulded to fit into a worldview; experiences which do not conform to ideological precommitments are ignored, obscured or simply dismissed. Sometimes this process is conscious and calculated, other times it is unconscious, perhaps simply habitual and unreflexive. Further, and as Marx pointed out in various texts, the struggle for change is not always overt. Rather, each contending nation, class and/or social group deploys reason to fabricate an ideology that becomes its weapon for concealing the full reality of the struggle. This is one lesson that history has taught.

The nature and process of ideological obscuration was recognized and elaborated by Marx. He argued that, "[I]n considering such revolutions it is always necessary to distinguish between the material revolution in the economic conditions of production" on the one hand, "and the judicial, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic--in a word, ideological forms" on the other hand.[2] It is through the ideological forms that human beings become conscious of the antagonisms and struggle and seek to articulate those in revolutionary practice. The struggles are born from the conditions and needs of life and are engaged in both by individuals and social beings in order to affect those conditions and to satisfy human needs.[3] This recognition by Marx of the role of human agency in history is often ignored by those who would wish to ascribe to Marxists an uncompromising determinism. In the "Theses on Feuerbach," Marx is very clear in rejecting what has become known as "vulgar" materialism. In the third thesis quoted above, Marx explicates that human beings change circumstances and thus it is not adequate to simply state that social beings are the product of their circumstances.[4] To the contrary, the relationship of human beings to the material and social condition is interactive, multifaceted and evolving.

In effect, reason, from which ideologies emanate, does have preeminence but it is used to manipulate historical lessons in a way that is simply self-serving. Reason can be deployed in ways that preserve relations of power/dominance or in ways that seek to promote freedom and self-determination. In fact, *even to argue against reason,* it is necessary to exercise reason and to proffer arguments in an intelligible (that is, not irrational) manner. In this chapter I show how throughout history the United States has acted according to an ideology which presupposed that it ought to create and preserve a condition of political, economic and military dominance. A reasoned articulation of the "lessons of history" will show how the actions of the United States have been antithetical to the pursuit of decolonization and national liberation, especially for Latin America and the Caribbean.

---

[2] Marx in Emile Burns, A Handbook of Marxism (1936), 372.

[3] N.I. Bukharin, Historical Materialism (1926), 161.

[4] Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in Marx and Engels, Selected Works, 2 vols. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), 403.

Through the prism of historical experiences, this chapter examines the contending ideologies evident in the Nicaraguan Revolution and *Contra*/revolution in an inter/national political-economic and historical context. It is my position that the intervention in Nicaragua, first to prevent, and then to subvert the Revolution, was not an isolated event. Rather, it was part of a pattern evident in United States foreign policy since its heydays of imperialism in the 1800s. In order to establish this claim, I look at the United States in a "funhouse mirror," meaning I consider what the United States might see if it were reflexive and looked at itself from different angles, points of views or perspectives on politics, history and life in general. By establishing the inter/national political-economic and historical contexts, I show that the "reflections" indicate a repetition of actions, especially reactionary interventions and support for counterrevolutions.

The funhouse mirror reflects an ever-increasing distortion and perversity in the representation of events in the "Third World," particularly where anti-imperialist nationalism is involved. The pursuit of national self-determination first by colonial and then postcolonial (neocolonial) states has been viewed by the United States and Western Europe as contrary to "order" and "civilization." I take the long view of history in order to show that the Carter and later Reagan Administrations' reactions to the Nicaraguan Revolution and *Contra*/revolution were a continuation of United States global foreign policy attitudes and positions, especially toward Latin America and the Caribbean. I show that the ideology of policymakers can obscure and mystify the United States' systemic domination of foreign peoples, sometimes relying on like-minded leaders within those foreign nations (a clientelist relationship).

As in Chapter I, the use of "inter/national" reflects my assumption that all "foreign policies" emanate from domestic institutions and policymakers. Thus it is necessary to understand both the domestic context and the ideologies of policymakers in order to have a sound understanding of the politics between nations. By foreign "policymakers" or "decisionmakers" I mean "[T]hose individuals in each state who exercise the powers of making and implementing foreign policy decisions."[5] Traditionally such persons have been (and continue to be) of a specific class, race/caste and gender, and invariably these identity interests influence their perspective; their actions invariably preserve their positions in the domestic/external power hierarchy. Jack Plano and Roy Olton put it more conventionally when they wrote that "[O]fficial decisionmakers may be influenced--sometimes decisively--by private individuals and groups that serve as consultants or function as unofficial members of the nation's 'establishment.'"[6] This is also true of the international 'establishment.'

---

[5] **"Foreign Policy Process: Decisionmakers," in Jack C. Plano and Roy Olton, The International Relations Dictionary, 4th edn. (Santa Barbara, Cal.: ABC-CLIO, 1988), 13-14.**

Particularly since the 1800s, precisely the period when the Latin republics were forcing decolonization from Spain, the internal political-economy of Nicaragua became interwoven with United States imperialism and pervasive interventions in Latin America generally. In the next section I focus primarily on major foreign policy doctrines since that period. I show that there have been multiple interventions worldwide based on a similar foreign policy logic: preserving United States power/domination economically and militarily against the influence of various European states. In effect, the interests and aspirations of Latin American and Caribbean states have been subsumed under, and even displaced by, European and North American interests. This places the former states in a position of subordination, with a neocolonial instead of a postcolonial status.

---

[6] Plano and Olton, The International Relations Dictionary, 13.

In addition to this brief introduction, this chapter has three additional sections. First I elucidate in some detail the previous presidential doctrines from the 1840s to the late 1970s. This will provide the doctrinal pre/text for understanding the logic of policymakers who have shaped and continue to shape United States foreign policy and frequent global interventions. It will also provide a useful context for understanding the establishment ideology of the Carter and Reagan Administrations despite the changing inter/national environment in which they came to power. This ideology was basically realist or Machiavellian. I will show in this and the next two chapters that neither Carter nor Reagan's foreign policies represented a radical disjuncture from previous Administrations. As a prelude to the Carter Administration, my second aim is to critically examine the inter/national stage and Carter's general foreign policy. This will provide the context for a more specific assessment of Carter's policies toward Somoza, the *Sandinistas*, and the Nicaragua state. Finally, I shift the analysis to a more theoretical focus. Drawing upon Jurgen Habermas, I take a more abstracted look at the ideological commitments of the United States foreign policymakers especially since the 1940s, as well as some responses and acts of resistance to the status quo.

II.2. Contending Ideologies and Doctrinaire Interventions

Two major developments greatly influenced United States presidential doctrines as they relate to Central America and, more generally, global interventions. The first significant development was centred in the early imperialism of the United States. That imperialism was guided by a sense of manifest destiny and an effort to displace the influence of European colonial powers in Latin America and the Caribbean. The sentiments of the time are illumed by Robert Armstrong in a short essay, "Visions of America," in which he discusses the justifications for United States imperialism.[7] The early doctrines were concerned with establishing a United States sphere of influence based upon a self-described *mission civilitrice*. The rationales came from different sources but they all had a similar theme: the United States' moral, political and economic superiority which had to be preserved and perpetuated by controlling the destinies of other states. In effect, this overarching conception of superiority anticipated what Antonio Gramsci over 100 years later was to call "hegemony."[8] I will elaborate upon this concept in Chapter VI as I shift the concern of this study to a rethinking of liberation. For the moment, I want to elaborate upon this imperial notion of a *mission civilitrice*.

---

[7] **Robert Armstrong, "Visions of America," NACLA Report on the Americas XVII, 6 (November/December, 1983), 32.**

[8] **Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, ed. and**

In 1809 Thomas Jefferson, otherwise known for his defense of small and manageable political units, professed that "I am persuaded that no constitution was ever before as well-calculated as ours for extensive empire and self-government."[9] Similarly, in 1816 Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky claimed that "[I]t is in our power to create a system of which we shall be in the center and in which all South America will act with us."[10] Reflecting the imperialist doctrine of the time, John L. O'Sullivan wrote in the New York Morning News on December 27, 1845 that "[I]t is our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federative self-government entrusted to us."[11] With considerable hubris even Woodrow Wilson, a proponent of national self-determination, claimed that "I am going to teach the South American republics to elect good men."[12]

---

trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971); and his Letters from Prison, trans. Lynne Lawner (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

[9] Jefferson quoted in William Appleman Williams, America Confronts a Revolutionary World: 1776-1976 (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1976), 25.

[10] Clay quoted in Williams, America Confronts a Revolutionary World, 59.

[11] O'Sullivan quoted in Williams, America Confronts a Revolutionary World, 35; and Armstrong, "Visions of America," 32.

[12] Wilson in Williams, America Confronts a Revolutionary World, 139.

The pursuit of empire was to prove incompatible with the principle of self-determination and Latin America was often subjected to United States self-proclaimed missions which justified interventions to "civilize" or "Christianize" the various republics. All of this was done under the guise of "moral duty" and "manifest destiny," a worldview directed against Latin America in the 1800s, at a point when the terroritories were disentangling themselves from over 250 years of Spanish and British colonial domination. This interventionist worldview directly contradicted the Latin American aspirations for self-direction and governance. The United States' "conception of an all-powerful, inscrutable, inflexible Destiny"[13] was one from which Latin American countries would often rebel but from which they would escape only periodically as in the cases of the Cuban Revolution and later the Nicaraguan Revolution. In both cases, counterrevolutionary activities were supported by the United States in order to destroy any potential they might have as examples of a different way of existence.

One of the first major foreign policy doctrines which gave institutional signification to these imperial justifications was that of President James Monroe (1817-1825). On December 2, 1823, Monroe warned the European powers that Latin America no longer would "be considered as subject for future colonization by any European power," and further, European interventions would be considered "as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."[14] In effect, the Western Hemisphere was the United States' sphere of influence and essentially, off limits to former European colonial powers. On several occasions the economic and territorial designs of United States and Britain came into conflict in Central America. In fact, the 1800s in Nicaragua were characterized by external interventions and the contestation of power between the United States and Britain. Two examples stand out as indicative. First, between 1853 and 1854, Fruto Chamorro became president of Nicaragua in a typically controversial and undemocratic manner. His support came primarily from the Nicaraguan establishment, namely the Conservative Party and wealthy ranch owners from Granada.[15] In addition, however, he received covert aid from Britain which was trying to prevent United States investors from acquiring the rights to construct a transisthmus canal through Nicaragua. Eventually the United States built a canal in Panama and this temporarily eased the pressure on Nicaragua for such a canal.

---

[13] On the notion of "destiny" see George Novack, Understanding History: Marxist Essays (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), 16-17.

The second example aptly symbolizes the significant power not only of the United States government, but also of its citizens in/over Nicaragua. In 1855, Fruto Chamorro was succeeded by William Walker, a United States filibuster who invaded Nicaragua with 58 soldiers of fortune who called themselves the "Immortals," with the surreptitious support of the Liberal Party centred in Leon, the United States capitalist Cornelius Vanderbilt, and the Accessory Transit Company.[16] Walker was a young lawyer from the Dixie South, an area characterized by white (European) supremacy and resisting the pressures from the Yankee North and southern abolitionists. He received financial and political support from these states in order to conquer the five Central American republics and establish a "slave belt" from the Southern United States to Panama. In rigged elections in 1856, Walker became Nicaraguan president. His government was formally recognized by the Administration of Franklin Pierce despite the fact that every Central American state expressed their opposition. Walker legalized slavery, made English the official language and commenced issuing bonds to United States capitalists. His regime was eventually deposed by a united Central American army.

---

[14] Isaac Dookhan, The United States in the Caribbean (London: Collins Caribbean, 1985), 19-20.

[15] Meyer, Historical Dictionary, 90.

During the last battle on April 11, 1857, Walker's forces of 2,000 (including Liberals and United States citizens), were forced to surrender under sustained pressure from a 17,000-strong Central American army led by General Zavala. Walker was allowed to surrender to Commander Davis of the United States Navy on May 1, 1857. By this time, the casualties of war were enormous: 5,800 Central Americans were killed and 1,000 United States citizens. Walker was transported to the United States and received a hero's welcome upon arrival in New Orleans. However, that same month, Walker returned to Nicaragua, landing at Greytown. Again he was forced to surrender and taken into custody by Commodore Pauldings, and returned to the United States. In a subsequent trial, he was acquitted of any wrongdoing. No doubt it would have been a contradiction to convict this "hero" especially given the fact that initially the Pierce Administration had recognized Walker as the legitimate president of Nicaragua.

---

[16] Al Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom (Rolling Bay, WA.: Sea Otter Press, 1988), 2-3; and Meyer, Historical Dictionary, 465-466.

The Walker escapades were not over. In 1859 he published a book of his exploits entitled The War in Nicaragua[17] and in 1860 he returned for the third time with a mercenary army. This time his attack was on a fort at Truxillo in Honduras. The British, who had designs over the area, and who had a protectorate over Nicaragua's Atlantic (Mosquito) Coast, took Walker into custody. This time they did not turn him over to the United States. Rather, British Captain Norvell Salmon of the warship "Icarus," turned Walker over to the Honduran authorities, who tried, convicted and put him before a firing squad on September 12, 1860; he was 36 years old. In the years to follow, the United States Navy and the Marines repeatedly intervened and occupied parts of Nicaragua, especially during the period 1894 to 1899. The interventions usually lasted a short duration and the pretext was always the same: to protect United States citizens and their capitalist interests. This pretext of protecting "American lives and property" was to continue in the decades to follow.

---

[17] See Walker, The Filibuster War (New York: Doubleday, 1886).

The Monroe Doctrine was expanded by a doctrine which is variously known as the "Roosevelt Corollary," the "big stick" policy and "gun boat diplomacy." On December 6, 1904 the Roosevelt Doctrine was expounded in reponse to internal political turmoil in the Dominican Republic resulting from the assassination of its President Ulises Heureaux and the pressure of German, Spanish, Belgian and Italian creditors (including asking their governments to send war ships) on the new Dominican government to repay loans. The Doctrine was both a response to the European economic influence in the Caribbean and to the potential impact of foreign civil wars on United States economic and military interests. President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1905), in a speech to Congress, stated that "[C]hronic wrong-doing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may...ultimately require the intervention of some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere...the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States...to the exercise of an international police force."[18] According to the Corollary, then, internal instability was indicative of a condition of un-civilization and the United States was "compelled" to intervene in order to restore a civilized condition.

---

[18] Dookhan, The United States in the Caribbean, 48-49.

Roosevelt presupposed that the United States had a right or entitlement to interfere in the internal affairs of the Dominican Republic; "right" was based in the "civilized" nature of American society and the military strength to act as an "international police force." Together, the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollory were used to justify the acquistion of various territories in the Caribbean: Puerto Rico, the Danish West Indies (now the United States Virgin Islands) and military control of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and in Central America, control of Panama and the Panama Canal.[19] In fact, President William H. Taft imagined a United States without boundaries: "[T]he day is not far distant when three Stars and Stripes at three equidistant points will mark our territory: one at the North Pole, another at the Panama Canal," and Washington, D.C.[20] In rationalizing why he thought "[T]he whole hemisphere will be ours" Taft stated that it was "by virtue of our superiority of race, it is already ours morally [Destiny]." He continued by claiming that the "Monroe Doctrine may well be made to include intervention to secure for our merchants and our capitalists opportunity for profitable investments."[21] Thus, a United States president professed a doctrine of intervention and political dominance and those who followed him added as it pleased them without regard for any notion of self-determination for Latin American and Caribbean states. In fact, and conveniently the United States policymakers persuaded themselves that it was the wish of Providence that they were dominant. Thus, imperialism and colonialism were justified by a notion of fate or Destiny, by a belief in white racial supremacy, and by the dictates of capital. Not much has changed in the notion of supremacy although the justificatory language has changed to become more sophisticated in obscuring the conscious intent to dominate.

---

[19] Dookhan, The United States in the Caribbean, 5, 91-108.

[20] Taft in 1912, quoted in Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 2.

[21] Taft in Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 2.

After World War I, there was a shift away from the frequency of interventions aggressively pursued in the prior period. This was partly influenced by the absence of a serious threat from Europe as a consequence of the devastation of the continent in the aftermath of W.W. I. Further, during the Treaty of Versailles Peace Settlements in 1919, President Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921) had supported the doctrine of self-determination. Ironically, this doctrine was to became the basis for increasing opposition to United States imperialism within Central America; nationalism premised on the right of Central Americans to govern themselves without external interference was embraced by Augusto Cesar Sandino in Nicaragua and Augustín Farabundo Martí in El Salvador. Additionally, in the 1920s there was increasing support for the development of a doctrine of non-intervention in relation to Latin America and the Caribbean. In 1923 at the Fifth Pan-American Conference held in Santiago, Chile, a commission of jurists appointed by the Conference declared interventions illegal and unjustifiable.[22] At the Sixth Conference held in Havana, Cuba in 1928, the United States blocked a resolution which would have supported the declaration of non-intervention. Nevertheless, the United States foreign policymakers were made aware of the rising tide of opposition to pervasive interventions. Moreover, in 1928 the Kellogg-Briand Pact renounced aggresssive wars. Yet no serious effort was made to curb United States imperialism until there was widespread opposition within the United States, especially during the Herbert Hoover Administration (1929-1933) and a period of "gun boat diplomacy."

Hoover had proven himself to be in the same mould as previous presidents when it came to tolerating repressive dictators. Two cases stand out as indicative of this tendency, *la matanza* in El Salvador and the marine occupation of Nicaragua.[23] First, during the period 1912-1933, the United States marines occupied Nicaragua and guaranteed the preservation of power of three consecutive Conservative party governments: Adolfo Díaz (1911-1916), Emiliano Chamorro (1917-1920) and Diego M. Chamorro (1921-1923); the latter was the sixth Chamorro to be president of Nicaragua. In an internal nationalist coup attempt against this United States-Conservative alliance, Liberal José María Moncada and Augusto Cesar Sandino fought the United States marines. According to Sandino's Political Manifesto, "I am Nicaraguan and I am proud that in my veins flows, more than any other, the blood of the American Indian [his mother], whose regeneration contains the secret of being a loyal and sincere patriot. The bonds of nationality give me the right to assume responsibility for my actions on matters of Nicaragua," and further, in contrast, he argued that 16 years prior "Adolfo Díaz and Emiliano Chamorro ceased being Nicaraguans, because their greed destroyed their right to claim that nationality."[24] In July 1927, Sandino sent a note to the United States Marine Captain commanding the occupation in which he stated: "I have received and understand your communication of yesterday [demanding surrender]. I will not surrender...I want a free country or death. I am not afraid of you."[25] For Sandino, only death would compel him to surrender to a foreign military occupying "his" country, and even then, such a surrender only would be a "physical surrender."

---

[22] Dookhan, The United States in the Caribbean, 68.

[23] Thomas P. Anderson, Matanza (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1971); and Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, The Central American Fact Book (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1986).

Moncada eventually laid down his arms but Sandino and his Army for the Defense of National Sovereignty refused to surrender and fought a guerrilla war against United States occupation for some seven years.[26] In the interest of negotiating a peaceful settlement, Sandino entered talks mediated by the United States Ambassador to Nicaragua Henry Stimson. He was ultimately betrayed and assassinated by the *Guardia Nacional* (National Guards). The Guards had been created by the United States; its first commander was also from the marines. It was then handed over to Anastasio Somoza García, who used the institution to assassinate his nationalist opponent Sandino, to seize power and control Nicaragua with United States support. The Undersecretary of State Robert Olds provided the ideological framework for the United States' position:

---

[24] Sandino, "Political Manifesto," July 1, 1927, issued from the mines of San Albino, in Anne Walsh, Benny McCabe, Kieran Rose and Sean Murphy, Nicaragua: An Unfinished Canvas (Dublin: Nicaraguan Book Collective, 1988), 9-11.

[25] Sandino quoted in Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 270.

> The Central American area constitutes a legitimate sphere of influence for the United States, if we have due regard for our own safety and protection....Our ministers accredited to the five republics...have been advisors whose advice has been accepted virtually as law...we do control the destinies of Central America....Until now Central America has always understood that governments which we recognize and support stay in power, while those which we do not recognize and support fall.[27]

The second example in the same vein occurred in neighbouring El Salvador. In 1932, a popular rebellion of the Nahuatl-speaking Pipil Indians led by José Feliciano Ama and the Communist Party headed by

---

[26] Bruce Marcus, "Introduction" to Tomas Borge, Carlos Fonseca, Daniel Ortega, Humberto Ortega and Jaime Wheelock, Sandinistas Speak (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1982), 8.

[27] Robert Olds, "Confidential Memorandum," January 2, 1927, quoted in Richard Millett, The Guardians of the Dynasty: A History of the US-Created Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua and the Somoza Family (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1977).

Augustin Farabundo Martí raged against the ruling oligarchy and foreign investors' exploitation of indigenous peoples and workers. The Pipils lost their communal lands to large fincas and the military dictatorship granted huge land concessions to foreign economic corporations; many indigenous peoples were forced into wage labour. Further, the Great Depression saw their wages reduced by fifty per cent. Additionally, the Communist and other leftist parties were denied seats they had won in elections and thus they organized a protest to coincide with the Pipils' rebellion. A number of Communist Party members were rounded up and assassinated, including Martí, and eventually the Pipil rebellion was brutally repressed. It was estimated that between 10,000 to 30,000 Salvadorans died as a consequence of the orders of General Maximiliano Hernandez.[28] According to historian Thomas P. Anderson, "[T]he extermination was so great, that they could not be buried fast enough, and a great stench of rotting flesh permeated the air of Western El Salvador."[29] During this repression, known as *la matanza*, two United States destroyers and a naval cruiser with marines were stationed off the coast of El Salvador to ensure a "favourable" outcome for the United States. As well, the Marine Air Group stationed in Nicaragua was placed on alert.[30] In the face of this extreme tyranny, the United States forces watched and did nothing and presumably the end result was the "favourable" outcome desired by the Hoover Administration.

---

[28] Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, The Central American Fact Book (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1986), 200, 222n6.

[29] Anderson, The War of the Dispossessed: Honduras and El Salvador, 1969 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1981), 24.

The internal opposition to aggressive wars and imperialism eventually culminated in Franklin D. Roosevelt's (1933-1941) "good neighbour policy." At the Seventh Pan-American Conference in Montevideo, Mexico in 1933, the United States concurred with a Conference proposal that "[N]o state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another."[31] In 1936 at a Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the good neighbour policy was reaffirmed and the principal of non-intervention was more explicitly articulated. Despite these developments, it should be recalled that United States marines occupied Nicaragua from 1912-1933 and the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza García was installed. When the United States troops withdrew from Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, the marines left in their wake firmly entrenched dictators.

The decade of the 1930s witnessed the rise of fascism and dictatorships within Europe, Central America and the Caribbean. These dictatorships, combined with the Great Depression, fuelled zenophobic acts and political tyranny but also rebellions, insurgencies and revolutions. Perhaps the most horrific experiences were encapsulated in some of the logical outcomes of fascism and National Socialism: zenophobia, persecution and extermination. In January 1933 Adolf Hitler was named Chancellor by German President Hindenburg. Under Hitler, opposition parties were suppressed, strikes and demonstrations prohibited and socio-cultural and economic life were seriously controlled and monitored. In September 1935, the Nuremburg laws gave legal expression to massive persecution of Jews.[32]

---

[30] Anderson, Matanza, 159.

[31] Dookhan, The United States in the Caribbean, 69.

In Italy, Spain and Japan fascist regimes took power. In Spain, leftists, anti-clerics and anarchists were brutally repressed. This was followed by a three year civil war and General Francisco Franco, supported by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, defeated the opposition. The Nazi war and repression under fascist regimes highlighted the extreme brutality which human beings are capable of committing in the name of "race purification" or what is now called "ethnic cleansing": six million Jews, gypsies, (dis)abled and homosexuals died in Nazi gas chambers; 70,000 English civilians died from German bombing; 100,000 Chinese died from Japanese repression; the United States' bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki resulted in the death of at least 200,000 civilians.[33] In total, 45 million people died in World War II. By war's end, Europe was in ruins. Two states emerged as materially and militarily powerful: the United States and the Soviet

---

[32] The World Almanac and Book of Facts (New York: Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc., 1986), 507-510.

[33] The World Almanac (1986), 508-509.

Union and the relations between them came to dominate the international political and economic context for the next 50 years.

The second major development in United States foreign policy doctrines occurred after World War II and the rise of Soviet power and influence in the movements struggling for national liberation and decolonization; these movements were widespread in European and United States colonies and neocolonies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Many newly independent nations combined nationalism with Marxism and this was often interpreted by dominant United States foreign policymakers as hostile and contrary to United States interests. In the wake of World War II, the foreign policy doctrines had a distinctive preoccupation: "containing communism" and "rolling back communism," especially the influence of the Soviet Union. This concern dominated United States relations with Latin America and the Caribbean.

The birth of containment occurred during the presidency of Harry S Truman (1945-1949). His advisors on the Soviet Union were George Kennan and Averill Harriman. Kennan argued that the Marxist-Leninist ideology of Soviet leaders and their long years of clandestine activities had produced "secretiveness, the lack of frankness, the war of suspiciousness and the basic unfriendliness of purpose."[34] Further, he saw these "characteristics of Soviet policy, like the postulates from which they flow[ed as] basic to the internal nature of Soviet power" and those characteristics had to be changed through "firm and vigilant containment." For Kennan, containment could be achieved by strengthening the political and economic structures of neighbouring states. The Marshall Plan to make Europe economically viable (and a better trading partner) was one outcome of this perspective.

---

[34] Kennan quoted in John Spanier, American Foreign Policy Since World War II, 9th edn. (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1983), 27-30.

On March 12, 1947 Truman requested the Congressional appropriation of 400 million dollars in economic and military aid. This request led to the articulation of the Truman Doctrine which stated that "...unless we are willing to help free people to maintain their institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes...I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure."[35] Three days later Congress appropriated the funds, allowing Truman to intervene against the growing communist movement (which had swelled as the principal opposition to the Nazis) and the Greek Communist Party. The intervention benefitted a government which was pro-Britain and United States. The movement within Greece was characterized by the Truman Administration as externally inspired by the Soviet Union although its roots were firmly centred in the internal popular collaborations against the onslaught of Nazi Germany.

---

[35] Truman quoted in Spanier, American Foreign Policy, 30.

In the 1950s, after containment had not circumvented Soviet consolidation of power in Eastern Europe, foreign policy elites including Richard Nixon and Joseph McCarthy within the Republican Party pressured for a more militaristic approach to the Soviet Union and to "rolling back communism." The right-wing's answer was General Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961). Eisenhower's view was that "[W]e can never rest until the enslaved nations of the world have in the fullness of freedom the right to choose their own path, for then only, can we say that there is a possible way of living peacefully and permanently with communism in this world."[36] Here the irony and the contradictions of the internal politics of the United States cannot be overlooked. Consider that in the United States, African Americans, then commonly referred to pejoratively as "niggers," existed under a condition of legalized segregation. The Supreme Court had upheld a "separate but equal" doctrine which defended legalized segregation. The "Jim Crow" South as it was called, was not legally rescinded until December 9, 1953. Moreover, earlier challenges brought by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), led by Thurgood Marshall, who later became the first judge of African descent, initially were defeated. The United States was engaged in undemocratic repression of African and Native Americans at home, and at the same time claimed to be the stalwart defender of democracy abroad.

---

[36] **Eisenhower quoted in Stephen E. Ambrose, Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy, 1938-1980 (New York: Penguin, 1980), 186.**

There apparently was no need to be reflexive in foreign policy, that is, to practice at home what was prosletyzed abroad. Thus, the United States' intervention was not seen by its policymakers as an external ideological imposition, but as the vehicle to "freedom." Or, if they did concede the fact of imposition, in their view it was justified because of manifest destiny and the superior military and political civilization which the United States was believed to represent. Then Secretary of State John Foster Dulles described containment alone as "negative, futile and immoral" because it allowed "countless human beings to...despotism and Godless terrorism."[37] Eisenhower committed the United States to expanding its nuclear arsenal, and to threatening nuclear retaliation for any Soviet intervention; hence the policy's association with "brinkmanship."[38] This view of communism was to continue and it informed United States interventions against states which adopted a Marxist ideology and/or which maintained relations with the Soviet Union.

The Eisenhower Administration especially justified intervention in the Middle East in order to prevent either internal instability or the spread of communism. In 1953 it was used as a pretext by the CIA, headed by Allen Dulles, to overthrow the Iranian National Front government of Mohammed Mossadeq after the latter planned to nationalize British and United States-owned oil fields. The Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was imposed upon the Iranian people (and in 1979 the anti-United States Iran Revolution brought to power the Ayatollah Khomeini).[39] The nationalist Mossadeq was attempting to unsettle the economic domination of the European and North American powers within the Middle East. It is but another irony of history that Mossadeq's position was analagous to the efforts by Monroe and Roosevelt to undermine Europe's influence in the Americas; however, Middle Easterners were denied the right to do this in "their" national interests. In a similar scenario, in September 1954 military aid and advisors were sent to train the South Vietnamese army and to support Ngo Dinh Diem, a wealthy albeit corrupt landowner who was pro-Western (in 1963, the corrupt Diem was overthrown with CIA support).[40] Both saw the establishment of what amounted to a "cliency" relationship, meaning "a mutually beneficial, security-oriented relationship between the government of two countries that differ greatly in size, wealth and power."[41] With the United States as "patron" to its "clients" in Iran and South Vietnam, the leaders of the latter two countries were able to become relatively autonomous from civil society and, lacking the restraints of the popular will, were able to defy or simply ignore the demands for political participation. The popular resistance to political alienation and repression was, ironically, the contrary of the intended stability and order; client relationships fostered dissent, insurrections and revolutions. In the case of Iran, the autonomy of the state from civil society was significantly, if not decisively, influenced by petrodollars.

---

[37] Ambrose, Rise to Globalism, 187.

[38] Armstrong, "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," 8-9.

---

[39] See, Mark J. Gasiorowski, U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); and George Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).

[40] Armstrong, "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," 9-10.

[41] Lenczowski, U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah, 2.

The intervention in Guatemala in 1954 shared similarities with the Iran intervention and the 1932 *matanza* in El Salvador. They all showed the increasing power and influence of United States multinational corporations and their close relations with the political establishment and foreign policymakers. Jacobo Arbenz was a popularly elected reformer incongruent with the political context of dictatorships in most Central American republics. Although he legalized the Communist Party, he rejected class analysis and posited what might be called a postcolonial and reformist ideology. According to Arbenz, the reforms envisioned for Guatemala, including sweeping land reform, were based on three objectives: "[F]irst [Guatemalans have] to convert our country from a dependent nation with a semi-colonial economy into an economically independent country; second, to transform our nation from a backward past with a predominantly feudal economy into a modern capitalist country; and third, to see that this transformation is carried out in a way that brings with it the highest possible elevation of the standard of living of the great masses of people."[42] In particular, Arbenz targeted for expropriation with compensation the 85 per cent of land owned by United Fruit Company which remained idle. Under the previous governments, the company's land concessions had come to total more land than possessed by 50 per cent of the Guatemalan population combined. The concessions by the ruling Guatemalan oligarchy to United Fruit included areas which traditionally comprised Mayan communal lands.[43] While these reform objectives made Arbenz popular with the masses of Guatemalans, he was opposed by the wealthy landowners, by United States corporations and government and regional dictators; an alliance of the three eventually resulted in his demise.

The campaigns of distorted information began almost immediately. United Fruit mounted a campaign describing Guatemala as under "an iron curtain."[44] Melodramatically, the United States Ambassador to Guatemala, John Peurifoy, claimed that "[T]he candle is burning slowly and surely, and it is only a matter of time before the large American interests [corporations] will be forced out completely."[45] Initially Anastasio Somoza García and United Fruit, (which had been granted similar concessions on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast including traditional Sumu and Rama land),[46] had planned "Operation Fortune" to overthrown Arbenz. However, Eisenhower approved "Operation Success" and Arbenz was deposed and replaced by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, an officer who had been trained at Fort Leavenworth.[47] It was later learned that Castillo's forces had trained on United Fruit land in Honduras and the CIA had flown in arms from Florida. Moreover, Allan Dulles who headed the CIA had been a senior law partner in the New York firm Sullivan and Cromwell, the firm employed by United Fruit and which acted as its foreign advisor.[48] Thus, with the collaboration of the Nicaraguan dictator, the United States Embassy in Guatemala City, the CIA and United Fruit, a democratic reformer was overthrown and replaced by a military dictator.

---

[42] Blanche Cook, The DeClassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy of Peace and Political Warfare (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 224.

[43] Thomas and Majorie Melville, Guatemala, The Politics of Land Ownership (New York: Free, 1971), 51.

[44] Melville, Guatemala, 51.

[45] Peurifoy quoted in Barry and Preusch, The Central American

In the late 1950s, the Eisenhower Administration encountered increasingly nationalist and anti-imperialist governments and almost without exception, characterized the actions of these governments as

---

Fact Book, 227.

[46] Carlos Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity: Capitalist Modernization and Revolutionary Change on the Atlantic Coast, trans. Susan Norwood (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), 46-47.

[47] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 227-228.

[48] Thomas McCann, Au American Company: The Tragedy of United Fruit (New York: Crown, 1976), 45; Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982), 70.

Soviet-inspired (implying postcolonial nationalists could not think for themselves). Perhaps one exception was Egypt. When Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, a radical nationalist, requested and was refused aid for a dam project, he nationalized the Suez Canal. He also turned to the Soviet Union for aid. The French, British and Israelis attacked Egypt, anticipating that access to the canal would be denied but also that the United States would support them. To the contrary, the United States backed Egypt, seeing it as a conduit to greater influence among the other Middle East nations. Eisenhower calculated that United States interests would be served by gaining Middle Eastern support as a buffer to the Soviet Union but also as an assurance for Middle Eastern oil.

On March 9, 1957 the United States Congress pledged support for what became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine; it held that the "employment of the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of [Middle East] nations requesting such aid, against...aggression from any nation controlled by international communism."[49] In 1958, this doctrine was used to support the deployment of 10,000 troops to support the Western-backed government of Camille Chamoun against a Lebanese pro-Nasser and pro-Arab League nationalist opposition.[50] Chamoun not only opposed Arab nationalism, he publicly supported the

---

[49] Armstrong, "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," 11.

[50] Marlene Dixon and Ed McCaughan, "The Suez Syndrome: U.S. Imperialism in Decline," Contemporary Marxism 8 (Spring, 1984), 1-17.

Eisenhower Doctrine.[51] Many Lebanese nationalists resented this and Camille's acceptance of United States troops instead of seeking an Arab League solution.

In the 1960s, Democrat President John F. Kennedy (1961-1963) came to power in the United States. It was during a period of rising expectations, optimism and popular pursuits of radical transformation internationally. Within the United States, the Civil Rights movement was underway and African-Americans were demanding an equal piece of the "national pie" and, along with their white liberal allies, were facing tremendous backlash from the white supremacist establishment. In Africa, 16 nations received their independence from European colonial powers and became members of the United Nations. In South Africa, protests against apartheid in Sharpville resulted in the brutal killings of 200 protestors by police protecting the preservation of apartheid and legalized race supremacy. Revolutions were brewing in Algeria against the French, and in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala against United States-backed regimes. Fidel Castro and Cuban guerrillas already had overthrown the United States-supported dictator Fulgencio Batista and since that time, Castro has stated correctly, "[T]he United States has never wanted to accept the existence of the Cuban revolution or the establishment of a social system that is different from its own."[52] In Nicaragua, the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* was founded and commenced opposition to the Somoza dictatorship.[53] The *Sandinista* struggle was to last through at least six presidents, three Republicans and three Democrats, without exception, each president supported the Somoza dictatorship.

---

[51] **"Phalanges Libanaises (kata'ib)" in Lawrence Ziring, The Middle East Political Dictionary (Santa Barbara, Cal.: ABC-CLIO, 1984), 224-225.**

In the November 1960 elections Kennedy defeated the Republican candidate Richard Nixon. Their election debates had focussed on the missile gap with the Soviet Union and, closer to home, on the need to "get tough with Cuba." Upon taking office, Kennedy's foreign policy reflected this attitude and approach to revolutions influenced by a worldview different from that of the United States.[54] His foreign policy actions were particularly interventionist. In fact, Robert Armstrong claimed that of recent presidents, Kennedy was rivalled only by Ronald Reagan in his efforts to expand United States military hegemony. In 1961 Kennedy claimed that "[O]ur frontiers today are on every continent."[55] Kennedy's "new frontier" ran from the 38th parallel in Korea to the Elbe in Germany, and throughout the Third

---

[52] Castro, Nothing Can Stop the Course of History, Interviews by Jeffrey M. Elliot and Mervyn M. Dymally (New York: Pathfinder, 1986), 5.

[53] Omar Cabezas, Fire From the Mountain: The Making of a Sandinista, trans. Kathleen Weaver (Scarborough, Ontario: New American Library, 1985); Doris Tijerino, Inside the Nicaraguan Revolution, As told to Margaret Randall, trans. Elinor Randall (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978).

[54] Armstrong, "Containment in the Third World," 18.

[55] Kennedy quoted in Williams, America Confronts a Revolutionary World, 139.

World.[56] Kennedy wanted every nation to know that "whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and success of liberty. This we pledge."[57] Echoing Truman, Kennedy set forth a doctrine that essentially justified intervention anywhere in the world; containment and rolling back communism were global.

Kennedy's intentions to intervene globally were mirrored in a number of actions. He authorized state-of-the-art counterinsurgency in Vietnam. Further, the elite forces known as the Green Berets were created in order to fight "small scale" wars, counterinsurgencies and counterrevolutions.[58] Moreover, covert activities against Cuba included the 1961 failed Bay of Pigs counterrevolution on 15 April, 1961 launched partly from Puerto Cabezas on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. According to one of Kennedy's top advisors, Adolf Berle, "[T]he conventions protecting against intervention did not apply because the communists had intruded into this hemisphere and, second, because Castro's government was an openly constituted totalitarian government which is clearly outside the provisions of the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro [on non-intervention]."[59] On April 17, Castro's forces captured 1,180 of the 1,297 forces which made up the exile

---

[56] Armstrong, "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," 12.

[57] Kennedy quoted in Ambrose, Rise to Globalism, 245.

[58] Armstrong, "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," 12-13.

[59] Berle quoted in Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 18.

Brigade 2506. The Cuban people did not support the Brigade, as misguided "intelligence" reports had believed; the expedition failed miserably. However, it was clear that the Kennedy Administration thought rolling back communism overrode the principles of self-determination and non-intervention.[60] After the Cuban counterrevolution failed, the CIA also engaged in assassination attempts against Fidel Castro.[61] In the midst of Kennedy's reactionary foreign policy, newly decolonized states continued to support Cuba's right to self-determination and to assert their national sovereignty and independence from United States and European hegemony. This was a juncture in history partly characterized by revolution and the pursuit of transformation, especially of the dictatorships which had been entrenched since the 1930s and onwards.

On September 16, 1961 some 25 states attended the first meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned States in Cairo, Egypt.[62] The roots of the movement can be traced to various meetings of recently decolonized states and particularly the meetings of 29 former colonies in Bandung, Indonesia in 1953 which fuelled the impulse toward South-South dialogue, non-alignment and further decolonization.[63] Historians generally credit three leaders for their political, ideological and moral insights: India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (carrying on the legacy of Mohandas Gandhi), Egyptian President Gamel Abdel Nassar and Yugoslavia President Josip Broz Tito after his break with Russian President Josef Stalin.[64] Later leaders included India's Indira Gandhi, Cuba's Fidel Castro and Jamaica's Michael Manley. Initially the non-aligned position was the autonomous assertion of state sovereignty in Africa and Asia. It was subsequently expanded to include the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean. The non-aligned states attempted to carve out foreign policy positions which produced "peaceful coexistence, equal state relations, cooperation for development and an end to colonialism."[65] These states sought to posit "a counter-ideology to the pressures from the 'Free World' and the 'Socialist system.'"[66] Despite these aspirations, and the clearly expressed desire to remain unshackled by Cold War posturing, the Kennedy Administration continued to heighten the ideological polarity.

---

[60] Dookhan, The United States in the Caribbean, 88.

[61] Jane Freeland, A Special Place in History: The Atlantic Coast in the Nicaraguan Revolution (London: War on Want and Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, 1988); and Armstong, "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," 13.

[62] Armstrong, "Containment and the Third World," 16-17.

---

[63] Geir Lundestad, East, West, North, South: Major Developments in International Politics 1945-1986, trans. Gail Adams Kvam (Toronto: Norwegian University Press, 1986), 17-22, 237-258.

[64] Armstrong, "Containment and the Third World," 17.

[65] Willet, The Non-Aligned Movement: The Origins of a Third World Alliance (New York: Nichols Publishing Company, 1978), 29.

[66] Willets, The Non-Aligned Movement, 29.

Conflict again arose over Cuba when between August 29 and October 14, 1962 United States U2 reconnaissance airplanes spotted Soviet missile sites. Kennedy issued a blockade against Cuba on October 22 giving rise to what became known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. He also issued an ultimatum to the Soviet Union to remove the missiles or risk a nuclear attack; the ultimatum brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. However, the Soviets issued a compromise which saw the United Nations supervise the removal of the missiles and Kennedy agree not to invade Cuba.[67] In the aftermath of the Kennedy Administration, Cuba was ostracized by subsequent presidents who sought to avoid "another Cuba." In fact, I will show that efforts to subvert the Nicaraguan Revolution were centred primarily in this obsession with avoiding or preventing "another Cuba."

These policies were generally continued by his predecessor, Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969), after Kennedy's assassination in 1963. There was domestic change, including Johnson's pushing through Congress a Civil Rights bill, a political change which Kennedy had seemed reluctant to make apparently for fear of losing a second term election. In the area of foreign policy, Johnson had to face the fact that conventional wisdom on foreign policy had failed. Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Roumania had become aligned with the Soviets despite containment. There are several variations on how this came to be the case. First, United States policymakers had conceived of communism as a monolith and had believed that because they conceived of the Soviet Union as "the enemy," then ipso facto so too would countries in Eastern Europe. Second, the Soviet Union had been in Eastern Europe from the early to mid-1940s. Although it may have consolidated its influence and control except perhaps for Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union had not just arrived in Eastern Europe. The latter construction and notion of "Soviet invasion" was mostly an exaggerated figment of foreign policymakers' imagination; they were increasingly preoccupied by the "Red threat." In outlining this chronology, I do not intend to suggest that under Stalin repression was not enormous and indefensible. Rather, I want it to be clear that the communist ideology was attractive for some postcolonial states despite Stalin's perversions. In later years, however, the legacy of Stalin was to be the spectre raised by anti-Marxists in order to discredit the ideology and its influence on revolutionaries.

---

[67] Dookhan, The United States in the Caribbean, 89-90.

Wars of national liberation worldwide were embracing Marxism and proving resistent to United States pressures. Moreover, within Vietnam, a peasant army was defeating the superior conventional military power of the United States. Within the United States, there was opposition to increasing taxes to fund the war, to the massive deaths in Vietnam and to the rising tensions over the Civil Rights movement and the push for equality for African-Americans in education, jobs and housing. The Johnson Doctrine focussed a little closer to home; it put an emphasis on containing communism within Latin America and the Caribbean. Under Johnson, two significant interventions occurred in the Caribbean: one in Guyana and the other in the Dominican Republic. First, in 1963 the CIA and the British Intelligence funded strikes and opposition parties against the Marxist-influenced government of Dr. Cheddi Jagan in Guyana. In December 1964, under a settlement worked out by the British Secretary of State for the Colonies Duncan Sandys, and supported by the United States, Jagan's People's Progressive Party was ousted.[68]

Similarly, fearing "another Cuba" in the Dominican Republic, Johnson authorized the dispatchment of 40,000 marines to suppress a rebellion and influence the political outcome. The popular politician Juan Bosch was opposed because he was "too friendly with communists" and Reid Cabral was installed as president. A revolt against Cabral and in favour of Juan Bosch occurred on April 24, 1965. Johnson dispatched the *U.S.S. Boxer* carrying 500 marines and the 82nd Airborne Division comprised of 23,000 troops. The Bosch forces were defeated and a Government for National Reconstruction headed by General Antonio Imbert was installed with the assistance of the United States representative, William Bowdler.[69] Later, under the Carter Administration, Bowdler was to reappear and lead the mediation efforts to replace Somoza but at the same time prevent the *Sandinistas* from coming to power. Further, Johnson persuaded the Organization of American States to assemble an Inter-American Peace

---

[68] Dookhan, The United States in the Caribbean, 91.

[69] Dookhan, The United States in the Caribbean, 92-93.

Force with soldiers from Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, Brazil and Paraguay. Ironically, the Nicaraguan forces were led by Colonel Enríquez Bermúdez Varela who was to become the principal head of the *Contra* armed forces. The Inter-American forces preserved an uneasy peace until elections on June 1, 1966 between Bosch and Joaquin Balaguer from the *Partido Reformista*. The elections resulted in the "victory" of Balaguer.[70] Under Kennedy and Johnson, numerous interventions occurred ostensibly in the interests of rolling back communism; in their wake were left right-wing dictators.

Of the recent presidential doctrines, Richard Nixon's (1969-1973) was perhaps the least expansionist although he did commit the United States to sharing responsibilities for global policing with regional powers.[71] Additionally, he did not attempt to "roll back" the dictatorships imposed upon Latin American and Caribbean peoples. In one sense, his was a doctrine reminiscent of the Roosevelt Corollary. For Nixon, containment of communism was to be achieved through "detente." Where previous Administrations had played into the ideological polarity which existed in the aftermath of World War II, Nixon's doctrine reflected the Vietnam reality. Containment could not be achieved exclusively by the United States, and certainly not strictly by military means. Thus Nixon sought to encompass greater diplomatic, political and economic pressure into the foreign policy matrix. To this end, his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger opened nuclear arms limitation talks with the Soviet Union and linked such talks to economic trade and security issues. Further, the boundaries of Eastern Europe were recognized and East Germany was granted official recognition.[72]

---

[70] Dixon and McCaughan, "The Suez Syndrome," 4-10.

[71] Armstrong, "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," 7.

With the Arab oil embargo in 1973, the international economic realities and the need to seek non-military global solutions came into clearer focus. The embargo resulted in greater interaction between international business and politicians. In the United States, the Trilateral Commission headed by Chase Manhattan Bank President David Rockefeller emerged and produced a number of foreign policy papers in the area of international political-economy and security. However, Nixon and Kissinger's emphasis on detente was in fact an expression of modern realism and power politics; it was not necessarily a political-economy perspective. The focus was primarily East-West. This did not satisfy the transnational conglomerate leaders who wanted more emphasis to be placed on economics and making the world safe for investment, for trade and for the pursuit of capital.

The interventions under Nixon were no less guided by anti-communism and fear of radical nationalism. By the time Nixon ended the war in Vietnam, three million tons of bombs had been dropped, massive quantities of chemical herbicides had been used which later caused widespread birth defects, cancer and poisoning; the CIA's assassination efforts alone produced 40,000 deaths.[73] The war had been expensive for the United States; it had been economically and environmentally devastating for Vietnam.[74] Even while it was withdrawing from Vietnam, interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean continued. In 1973 the CIA intervened in Chile in order to depose the popularly elected nationalist and socialist government of Salvador Allende. In his place the dictator General Pinochet was imposed and repression became the order of the day causing many Chileans to seek sanctuary abroad, especially in Canada.

---

[72] Armstrong, "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," 13.

In Southern Africa, two former Portuguese colonies received their independence after brutal wars of national liberation: Mozambique's Frelimo led by Samora Machel proclaimed the People's Republic of Mozambique in June, 1975 and Angola's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) led by Agostinho Neto announced the People's Republic of Angola in November, 1975.[75] Both were opposed almost immediately by the Nixon Administration. In 1975 Nixon requested 14 million dollars from Congress to finance the overthrow of Angola's socialist MPLA government using the proxy forces, Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA). Nixon's efforts failed and the Clark Amendment in 1976 banned further CIA support to the FNLA led by

---

[73] Dixon and McCaughan, "The Suez Syndrome," 5.

[74] Dixon and McCaughan, "The Suez Syndrome," 5.

[75] International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa and the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, Apartheid: The Facts (London, June, 1983), 88.

Holden Roberto (brother-in-law of President Sese Sekou Mobutu of Zaire). Aid to the rebels was continued through Israel and this replacement of the United States by Israel was to become a pattern during the 1970s and 1980s.[76] Moreover, violent conflicts raged in Kampuchea (now Cambodia) and East Timor between 1975 and 1976; in Uganda between 1976 and 1978; and in Argentina between 1976 and 1980.[77] In Cambodia (Kampuchea) and Argentina, the United States and Israel were the principal arms suppliers for the "anti-communists" despite the mass and indiscriminate killings which characterized their activities.

The CIA assistance to the counterrevolutions continued through the Carter and Reagan Administration; the latter authorized 13 million dollars in covert aid to the Angolan opposition forces, Unita, led by Jonas Savimbi.[78] Similarly, the CIA, Israel, Malawi and South Africa supported the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR or Renamo) against the Mozambican government. According to Jane Hunter, Renamo had "a particular reputation for ideological incoherence, being regarded by most other right-wing insurgencies as a gang of cutthroats."[79] Thus in the period of rapid decolonization when a number of newly independent countries were espousing nationalist sentiments and Marxist or Maoist rhetoric, the Nixon and then the Gerald Ford Administrations responded with CIA-authorized attempted counterrevolutions.

---

[76] Jane Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy: South Africa and Central America (Boston: South End Press, 1987), 59; Alan Ben-Ami, "U.S., Israel involved in Angolan arms affair, too," Jerusalem Post (December 19, 1986).

[77] Jacobo Timmerman, The Longest War: Israel in Lebanon (New York: Vintage, 1982), 121.

[78] Woodward, Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987 (Toronto: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 40, 426; James Brooke, "CIA said to Send Rebels in Angola Weapons via Zaire," New York Times (February 1, 1987).

It was at this political-economic and historical juncture that the two presidents upon whom this thesis now turns its focus, came to power: Democrat President James Carter (1977-1981) and Republican Ronald Reagan (1981-1989). In particular, except for slight variations, the foreign policies of Carter and Reagan shared ideas about the "need" to impose regimes "friendly" to the United States, to contain and roll back communism, and to oppose revolutions. Further, while there might have been differences in personal philosophies between Carter and Reagan, this was not particularly evident in the policies and concrete actions of Carter, especially in the later years of his Administration. The concrete positions taken by Carter in Nicaragua resulted in major contradictions which baffled international political actors and academic commentators alike. In the case of Reagan, the rising neoconservatism among elites combined with a Machiavellian worldview held by his principal foreign policymakers resulted in frequent international confrontations, interventions and covert efforts to preserve not only United States power but also its military and economic domination.

---

[79] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 60; also Jonathan Bloch, "Israel's new openings in Africa," The Middle East (January 1985); and "Israelis 'aiding MNR rebels,'" African Analysis (London, November 28, 1986).

Next, I turn to a more specific examination of Carter's general foreign policy context, particularly his efforts at containment through "global interdependence" and a focus on human rights.

II.3. The Inter/national Stage and Carter's Foreign Policy

Carter was sworn in as United States president during a period of tremendous global change and anxiety. Within the United States, citizens were reeling from the psychological ramifications of defeat in Vietnam, the shock of the Watergate scandal and pondering the significance of the Civil Rights and burgeoning contemporary women's movement. The Cold War appeared to have become an entrenched framework for viewing the world by United States foreign policymakers; it also weighed on the national psyche.

On the international stage, Third World leaders continued to express nationalist desires for decolonization and an end to European and United States imperialism. I have stated that many of the postcolonial states embraced Marxism or Maoism; the rising number of these movements and governments made for an interesting and unsettling moment in political history. With these movements also emerged institutional structures in support of respect for the sovereign integrity of newly postcolonial states: the Non-Aligned movement and the Group of 77.[80] These states were reluctant to be ideologically aligned to either the Soviet Union or the United States. Many wanted to avoid the ideological pressures to accept a dualistic foreign policy position. The ideology of non-alignment presented an alternative to bipolarity and the balance-of-power perspective of the Western states. At the Non-aligned Summit in Havana, Cuba in 1979, Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere pointed out the diversity and commonalities of states when he claimed "[W]e are not all friends. Some countries represented here are at war with one another. Our per capita income varies from $100 to $2,000 per year. Some lack access to the sea; others are isolated by enormous oceans."[81] The non-aligned states were not an undifferentiated or homogeneous political-economic or military bloc. However, they all had a shared desire not to be constrained by European and North American ideological differences exemplified by the Cold War. Moreover at the Summit in Havana, Nyerere cautioned the two powers not to attempt dissumulation because the non-aligned states fully recognized that "[D]ivide-and-conquer is an old technique of domination. The industrialized countries are aware of its utility," but Third World states did not want their urgent political and economic concerns subverted by ideological warfare.[82] Nevertheless, the need for economic and military assistance eventually compelled many Third World states to adhere to the constraints of the Cold War and this undermined the full potential of this "counter-ideology" as it was called.

---

[80] Robert Armstrong, "Containment and the Third World," NACLA Report on the Americas XVII, 6 (November/December, 1983), 16-21.

[81] Cuandernos del Tercer Mundo, Guia del Tercer Mundo 1981 (Lima, Peru: DESCO, 1980), 485.

In several articles written between 1979 and 1981, Trevor Farrell, an Economics Professor at the University of the West Indies, aptly captured the bind experienced by many Caribbean states: whether to conform to or resist bipolar alliances. He argued that many Caribbean states wanted to be non-aligned but ultimately found themselves constrained by the need for aid; it was a constraint United States foreign policymakers did not understand or to which they were simply indifferent. In Caribbean Contact (November, 1979), Farrell wrote:

> In economic desperation, these Caribbean territories are really prepared to seek help from the devil himself. But as countries try all kinds of different expedients, the result is intensified fragmentation in the region, since the wooing of different aid sources stimulates the taking of different political stances![83]

In his elaboration, Farrell pointed out the various economic approaches pursued: some countries attempted to lure offshore banks, notorious for laundering drug trafficking monies and hiding the wealth of tax evaders (Cayman Islands, Bahamas); others pursued medical schools (Grenada) or 'surrender to the Mafia, casinos and to fly-by-night investors.' In the absence of social, cultural or even ideological ties between investors and the populations, the end result was social disintegration (Antigua, Dominica). Most significantly, it produced a bind which Farrell suggested the United States and European policymakers did not appreciate, namely that such countries were "embittered and disillusioned by the mask of exploitation that US and European aid has turned out to be [and consequently] feel forced to seek aid from the socialist bloc." In fact, he saw the latter as the cause of such states taking "certain kinds of political positions [socialist], at least rhetorically." An informed observer would have noticed the marked disjuncture between the rhetoric of Caribbean political leaders and their domestic social and political policies. This, however, was not the case. The end result of the rhetoric was "to excite American reaction. The Americans, of course, want the region to be 'stable' -- meaning apparently, that we should lie down quietly so that we can be better and more effectively penetrated."[84] Thus for Farrell, the United States either did not appreciate the nuanced political context in the Caribbean or it was so entralled by its own "interests" that it sought to ensure pliant and submissive Caribbean states. The United States' positions often produced resentment and radical nationalist oppositions. This complex context apparently also was not understood by the Carter Administration.

---

[82] Cuandernos del Tercer Mundo, Guia del Tercer Mundo, 486.

[83] Farrell, Caribbean Contact (Barbados, November, 1979).

---

[84] Farrell, Caribbean Contact (November, 1979); also Caribbean Contact (March, 1981); and Pearce, Under the Eagle, 142-143.

In Central America, revolutions were brewing in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, inspired by Latin American nationalists Simón de Bolívar, Sandino, Augustín Farabundo Martí, José Martí, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. There was also rising displeasure against Duvalier in Haiti, Pinochet in Chile and Galtieri in Argentina, all right-wing dictators supported by the United States. The Nicaraguan nationalist discontent with Somoza, and the United States' sustained support for 46 years, was part of this larger regional and international picture. In the Caribbean, Jamaica had elected a Social Democrat Michael Manley who was supportive of Castro and the Cuban Revolution. Carter's reponses to these varied and complex dynamics were riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies: support for dictatorships, opposition to revolutionaries. Yet, in the beginning, Carter seemed to be advocating an alternative to the prevailing Machiavellian approach to foreign policy.

Carter's expressed worldview seemed to coincide with the aspirations of the Non-aligned states to avoid the Cold War conceptualization of international relations. The Non-aligned position was that the assumptions of the Cold War "reflected a sense of hopelessness and helplessness" and it subverted the power and potential of the postcolonial states; it re-colonized them by again making their concerns and contexts dependent upon the interests of the United States, Europe and even the Soviet Union.[85] At a 1976 speech at Notre Dame University in 1976, Carter seemed to be in agreement with this attempted international ideological shift. According to Carter, under his new Administration, United States foreign policy would no longer be driven by an "inordinate fear of communism." Further, Carter claimed that "[W]e must replace balance-of-power with world order politics," because in his view, it was "likely that in the near future issues of war and peace will be more a function of economic and social problems which have dominated international relations since World War II."[86] As an alternative to the prevailing focus, Carter's speech suggested he was still a realist concerned with war and peace. However, he was going to continue Nixon's pursuit of arms control talks and focus on human rights and the socio-economic conditions which fostered discontent within the Third World. Moreover, emphasis was placed on transnational financial and industrial corporations; this perspective was indicative of the views emanating from the Trilateral Commission headed by David Rockefeller.

Carter adopted many of the Trilateral Commission's position papers on foreign policy. Yet, the Commission's strategies were rife with contradictions, which were mirrored in Carter's foreign policies. The three main strategies of the Trilateralists were: one, "accomodation" to the Third World; two, non-aggressive resolution of international conflicts; and three, the avoidance of escalating East-West ideological tensions by pursuing policies such as Salt II talks in order to "maintain" the balance-of-power.[87] Trilateralists had criticized Carter's Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for his initial East-West focus which ignored North-South dynamics. The Trilateralists' fear was that the growing disparity between North and South would mean the inability of the South to pay its debts, especially to major United States financial institutions. In particular, they preferred a two-tier focus which would divide up the "Third" and "Fourth" Worlds according to economic potential and this favoured countries such as Brazil, Mexico, India and later the Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) in Asia. These latter states were to be coopted into the international management and security system and the Fourth World -- the poorer countries -- would be virtually pacified by loans and foreign aid.[88] Zbigniew Brzezinski, who had written for the Trilateral Commission, became an instrumental figure in the Carter Administration as National Security Advisor and a principal speechwriter. Another Trilateralist, Cyrus Vance, became Carter's Secretary of State. In total, five of the six

---

[85] Ambrose, Rise to Globalism, 94; also Peter Willets, The Non-Aligned Movement: The Origins of Third World Alliance (New York: Nichols Publishing Company, 1978).

[86] Carter quoted in Armstrong, "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," 14.

---

[87] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 132; and Holly Sklar, ed, Trilateralism: The Trilateral Commission and Elite Planning for World Management (Boston: South End Press, 1980).

[88] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 106; see Zbigniew Brzezinski's account in Between Two Ages (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971).

National Security Council's members were from the Trilateral Commission and Carter himself became a member.[89]

This apparent "ideological pluralism" and "peaceful coexistence" or "accomodation" were not meant to be taken literally. It was not an egalitarian partnership and, as Robert Tucker pointed out, even those who seemed to champion change were "uneasy over accepting the prospect of a world in which American influence would decline."[90] The Trilateralists favoured change but only if it was guided by the United States; they wanted "to manage the great changes they found sweeping the world. Through different and more congenial methods than those that were often employed in the past, they nonetheless aspired to achieve the goals of the past," and the contradiction between past goals and contemporary methods ultimately led to a failure of the strategy.[91] It failed because it could not circumvent the methods used to achieve the goals of the past. As Tucker pointed out, "[E]ven a policy of moderate containment cannot escape incurring the risk of intervention."[92] Consequently, as the tensions between the old goals and new methods deepened, Carter resorted to the old methods of interventions and the subverting of revolutions, including that of the *Sandinistas*.

---

[89] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 107-108.

[90] Tucker, "The Purposes of American Power," Foreign Affairs, 59, 2 (Winter, 1980/81).

[91] Tucker, "The Purposes of American Power," (1980/81).

[92] Tucker, "The Purposes of American Power," (1980/81).

In the early period of his Administration, Carter's "multipolar" perspective looked like it was at least temporarily going to displace the bipolar axis of the balance-of-power approach typical of the realist view and especially Cold War conceptualizations. While Carter's foreign policy was a reflection of the times and to a large extent a continuation of Nixon's approach, he was stridently criticized by arch-conservatives for his attempt to find an anti-militarist containment approach. The latter was described by arch-conservatives as "neo-isolationist" and indicative of a "Vietnam Syndrome."[93] These critical voices within the United States continued and eventually turned the tide in favour of Reagan and the Republicans who espoused a militant and militarist foreign policy in the late 1970s. In the face of these attacks, Carter proved ambivalent and ultimately ineffective in articulating his attempted shift in worldview, however slight. In the end, later in his Administration, Carter resorted to more militarist foreign policy rhetoric and action, including the Carter Doctrine, according to which the United States was prepared to intervene in the Persian Gulf because it represented "a vital security interest." Moreover, a powerful arch-conservative lobby, including the Committee on the Present Danger, whose membership included the likes of Eugene Rostow, Maxwell Taylor, Richard Allen and Dean Rusk, pressured Carter to take a more militarist approach to containing communism.[94] These pressures seemed to undermine the consistency and effectiveness of Carter's human rights policies and this ultimately led a number of international commentators to describe Carter's human rights claims as primarily rhetorical.[95]

---

[93] Armstrong, "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," 14-15.

Noam Chomsky expressed the scepticism toward Carter's support for human rights more bluntly when he suggested that in actuality, the Carter Administration had no consistent or even genuine concern for human rights.[96] Chomsky saw the rhetorical focus on human rights beginning around 1976 as being more specifically attributable to the American citizens' revulsion for worldwide repression which became known via vigilant human rights agencies such as Amnesty International and Americas Watch. The sheer barbarity of human rights abuses, especially in Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile and Argentina, were hard to cover up, even for consummate and sophisticated violators. Carter's deployment of what became a "human rights rhetoric" was partly effective because it gave the impression of concern and thereby obscured American government and business complicity with some of the most repressive of these regimes. In some cases aid was terminated. Yet, termination of support for El Salvador and Guatemala in 1977 was related less to the extent and pervasiveness of abuse and more, probably, to the fact of consistent public attention and media reporting (that is, other than Carter's human rights convictions).[97] According to Jane Hunter, under three successive military dictatorships, 45,000 Guatemalans had been "slaughtered" and one million mostly Mayan Indians "internally exiled" with thousands of others exiled abroad.[98] After the United States terminated aid, Israel became Guatemala's principal supplier.[99] The same is true of El Salvador; however, the Carter Administration later resumed aid. The human rights rhetoric did appear to have some effect in the Dominican Republic, including the imposition of a conservative landowning businessman in power instead of a "fascist dictator." The range of choice was narrow but apparently sufficient for buttressing what Chomsky called the "democratic facade" (a feigned interest in what the masses wanted).[100]

---

[94] See esp. Chapters 6 and 7 of Jerry W. Sanders, Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment (Boston: South End Press, 1983).

[95] Chomsky, "On human rights and ideology," Language and Politics, ed. C.P. Otero (Montreal, Quebec: Black Rose Books, 1988), 277.

[96] Chomsky, "On human rights and ideology," 277.

---

[97] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy: South Africa and Central America (Boston: South End Press, 1987).

[98] Allan Nairn, "Terror with a Human Face," Village Voice (November 5, 1985); Frank del Olmo, "In Guatemala, Fusiles y Frijoles," Los Angeles Times (February 11, 1983); Majorie Miller, "Indians' Culture Torn by Guatemalan Political Strife," Los Angeles Times (November 29, 1985).

[99] Cheryl A. Rubenberg, "Israeli foreign policy in Central America," Third World Quarterly (July, 1986); Edy Kaufman, Yoram Shapira and Joel Barromi, Israeli-Latin American Relations (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1979); Penny Lernoux, "Who's Who of Dictators Obtain Arms from Israel," National Catholic Reporter (25 December, 1981); Bishara Bahbah, Israel and Latin America, The Military Connection (New York: St Martin's Press and the Institute

For the most part, Carter's human rights claims were not even original to Carter. It is to these observations that I turn next. I have argued that prior to Carter, Nixon and later Ford had attempted to shift from an exclusive focus on ideology, especially in United States-Soviet Union relations. The same is true of human rights. Before Carter was elected president, members of Congress, under the Nixon and later Ford Administration, had sought to infuse respect for human rights into United States foreign policy. The Congress was also attempting to undermine the dominance of the Executive in foreign policy matters, especially since World War II. The Congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs published a report entitled "Human Rights in the World Community: A Call for Leadership" in March 1974. In particular, the report criticized presidential activities which "led the United States into embracing governments which practise torture and unabashedly violate almost every human rights guarantee pronounced by the world community."[101] Additionally, Jenny Pearce pointed out that the Foreign Assistance Acts of 1973, 1975 and 1976 explicitly called upon the president to withhold military and economic aid to governments which "consistently

---

for Palestinian Studies [Washington], 1986).

[100] Chomsky, "On human rights and ideology," 278.

[101] Foreign Affairs Committee, "Human Rights in the World Community" cited in Pearce, Under the Eagle, 108.

violated human rights."[102] Three themes from these Acts are particularly relevant to the examination of Carter and the Somoza dictatorship. First, Section 502(b) of the 1974 Act required the president to justify continued aid to governments where evidence existed that human rights were being violated consistently.[103] Second, Section 660 of the same Act made illegal the granting of aid to "provide training or advice, or provide any financial support, for police, prisons or other law enforcement forces for any foreign government" deemed to be engaging in human rights abuses. Third, the 1975 Act included an amendment sponsored by Senator Tom Harkin which granted Congress the power to deny or limit aid to countries which consistently engaged in human rights violations. In 1976 this position was strengthened by a joint resolution in the House and Senate which granted Congress the power to terminate military aid because of human rights violations.[104] Thus, when Carter came to office, the Congress had already begun to establish a framework for tying human rights to foreign policy.

Carter's adoption of the human rights perspective was consistent with this trend but also, it seems, his personal philosophy which was opposed to aggressive interventionism. However, this personal philosophy became circumscribed either by institutional constraints, the logic of militarism and intervention in the Americas in the Cold War era or the rising tide of neoconservatism among political elites. Initially there was an effort to create a rapproachment with Cuba's Fidel Castro and Jamaica's Michael Manley but this diminished when both refused to be "managed" from Washington.[105] Further, the CIA's covert interferences had been curtailed and the number of operatives reduced. Moreover, there was some effort to accomodate "ideological pluralism" in the interest of transnational economic pursuits. As Carter's Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher put it in 1978, "[N]early ten million American jobs depend upon our exports. Two-thirds of our imports are raw materials that we do not or cannot readily produce. One out of every three dollars of US corporate profits is derived from international activities. These economic issues are crucial to our national security."[106] It is precisely these same economic and security concerns which contributed to the undermining of the substantive nature of human rights pursuits. Economic interests and national security often resulted in the support for repressive dictators who espoused anti-communist sentiments (however gratuitously) and opposition to movements for radical change.

---

[102] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 109.

[103] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 109.

[104] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 109.

A second example of Carter's "accomodation" was the 1979 signing of the Panama Canal Treaty. Here, again, a significant motivating factor seemed to be economic security. The signing of the Treaty was only a formal relinquishment of control by the United States despite the vitriolic neoconservative opposition. Panama's economy was already significantly tied to earnings from the Canal: 40 per cent of its foreign earnings, 80 per cent of its commerce, 50 per cent of its population were in some way dependent upon income from the Canal and 70 per cent of its industries relied upon the Canal.[107] Further, between 1903 and 1973, Panama received an estimated 55 million dollars from the United States. During a visit to Panama in 1974, David Rockefeller described Panama as "an ideal new [banking] center in the Western Hemisphere." He was responding to the fact that Panama's 94-acre so-called "Colon Free Zone" was a tax-free haven for multinational corporations (and wealthy tax evaders). In 1976, the Zone had some 74 banks with deposits totalling 10,000 million dollars.[108] The Panama Canal itself was no longer the United States' central concern; it was now banking and United States investors held a virtual monopoly. This reality of economic dependence greatly influenced Panama's economy and thereby its internal politics.

---

[105] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 110.

[106] Christopher quoted in Pearce, Under the Eagle, 110.

Despite these instances, Carter maintained United States support for dictators, including General Anastasio Somoza Debayle in Nicaragua as well as the Shah in Iran, Marcos in the Philippines and

---

[107] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 113.

[108] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 114.

"Baby Doc" Duvalier in Haiti. Pearce pointed out that Carter's "human rights policy always distinguished between America's 'friends' and 'enemies,' leading to some of its most blatant inconsistencies."[109] Thus in October 1979 when Carter established the permanent Caribbean Contingency Task Force (Headquarters, Key West, Florida), he claimed it had a two-pronged objective; to "increase our economic assistance to alleviate the unmet economic and human needs" and "to ensure the ability of troubled peoples to resist social turmoil and possible communist domination."[110] Or, as the Head of the Task Force Rear-Admiral McKenzie put it, "[M]y people aren't here to fight the 3,000 man Russian brigade or the Cubans, but we're meant to control the force that will fight them...We've left a rotten apple in the middle of the Caribbean basin down here, and that rotten apple is Fidel Castro."[111] There was no appreciation for the fact that United States intervention contrary to local interests also equalled domination or, at best, control and hence the absence of self-determination. When McKenzie said "We've left a rotten apple" he identified the United States' assumption that "We" determine who governs in the Caribbean, not the citizens of the various island-states.

---

[109] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 117.

[110] Carter quoted in Pearce, Under the Eagle, 153.

[111] McKenzie quoted in New York Times (30 November, 1980).

In Grenada, the United States and British-supported government of Eric Gairy, who had governed Grenada since the 1950s with ample help from his "Mongoose Gang," was deposed by the New Jewel Movement led by Marxist-influenced Maurice Bishop in March 1979.[112] Despite the influence of Marxism, Bishop outlined a domestic policy for social justice as opposed to a socialist revolution. According to Bishop, "[P]eople of Grenada, this revolution is for work, for food, for decent housing and health facilities and for a bright future for our children and great-grandchildren."[113] Nevertheless, the United States Ambassador to Grenada Frank Ortiz' response was indicative of the Carter Administration's position on revolution in Latin America and the Caribbean. Ortiz informed Bishop that the principal concern for the United States was avoiding "another Cuba" and thus the United States would "view with displeasure any tendency on the part of Grenada to develop closer ties with Cuba."[114] Eventually Bishop was assassinated by a group of Marxists led by a former professor of Marxism, (Jamaican) Bernard Coard. The latter's group of about 200 intellectuals had joined the New Jewel Movement but the infighting common to most revolutions ultimately resulted in what Fidel Castro called "the senseless and mad step of arresting Bishop and, even worse, of firing upon the people and assassinating Bishop."[115] With the popularly supported Bishop dead, the CIA's destabilization activities were readily implemented and eventually under Reagan, the United States launched a full-scale invasion and removed the Coard government.

---

[112] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 121-122; Chris Seale, Grenada: The Struggle Against Destabilization (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1983).

[113] Bishop quoted in Pearce, Under the Eagle, 122.

[114] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 123.

The Carter Administration operated within a Cold War framework; he differed from his successors only in *how* he went about challenging those identified as "enemies," namely the Soviet Union and its allies especially Cuba. This was confirmed by National Security Advisor Brzezinski in May 1977 when he claimed "[A]merican longer range interests would be harmed by continuing indifference to the mounting desire in Central America for greater social justice and national dignity, as our indifference will only make it easier for Castro's Cuba to exploit that desire."[116] For Brzezinski, communism was the enemy and in the interest of undermining it, he supported the shipment and smuggling of books and other propaganda behind the "Iron Curtain."[117]

Warren Christopher stated before a House Committee in 1979 that the United States should support Nicaragua to prevent Marxism and to subvert or destabilize the influence of Cuba. He stated, "[W]e recognize some elements of the present government in Nicaragua might prefer a closed Marxist society. We recognize as well that Cuba is already providing substantial advice and assistance...[We cannot] walk away now. Precisely because others are assisting Nicaragua and may seek to exploit the situation there."[118] Aid to Nicaragua, then, had strings attached: first, to assist in non-Marxist or socialist change, second to subvert Cuban influence, and third, to ensure United States economic and military-security power/domination. The virtual obsession with Cuba diminished the support for genuine self-determination within Nicaragua.

---

[115] Castro, Nothing Can Stop the Course of History, 145.

[116] Brzezinski quoted in Pearce, Under the Eagle, 116.

[117] Woodward, Veil, 78-79.

In the next chapter I examine the Carter Administration's relationship with the Somoza regime, the Nicaraguan Revolution as it unfolded and the actions of United States foreign policymakers toward the *Sandinista* guerrillas. Before doing this, I think it is important to take a step back and reflect more carefully upon the nature of the ideology held by United States foreign policymakers and its national and international, that is, inter/national dimensions. As I stated earlier, this explication will be useful for contextualizing the actions of the Carter and Reagan Administration to be discussed in Chapters III and IV, respectively.

I.4. Conservatives: Old, New and Postmodern

The general worldview of the United States (that is, its policymakers) has been characterized as realist or Machiavellian, which is basically "conservative, empirical, prudent, suspicious of idealistic principles, and respectful of the lessons of history."[119] The reverse is not true of the other dominant schools, namely liberalism and Marxism. In other words, the description of realism as empiricial, prudent and respectful of the lessons of history does not mean that liberalism and Marxism are not similarly concerned or, in fact, more concerned about, say, history. Arguably, Marxists place greater emphasis on history and thus the difference would be less about the relevance of history and more about how it is interpreted and to what uses it is deployed.

---

[118] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 134-135.

Jurgen Habermas' discussion of conservatism aptly captured the central elements of the ideology which has undergirded United States hegemonic tendencies in Central America in the past and continues to do so in the present. In his Theory of Communicative Action, Habermas distinguished three types of conservatism.[120] First, adherents of "old conservatism" deplore change and nostalgically harken after some form of premodern political life and order. Second, adherents of the "new conservatism" pragmatically accept the economic and technological changes or "advances" in modern political life but studiously lament the cultural changes which are seen as (and are) potentially explosive. Finally, "young conservatism" he equated with postmodernism (and even antimodernism) in the vein of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault because of their rejection of any universal, including ethical, features of modernity.

---

[119] James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey, 2nd edn. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), 5.

[120] Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action, 2 vols. (Beacon Press, 1984, 1987); also "Modernity versus Postmodernity" New German Critique 22 (Winter, 1981), 3-14.

Habermas described postmodernists as "pseudoradicals" because in seeking to reject what might be called the universalist "shackles" of modernism and its related elements, they attempt to engender a "totally" decentered subjectivity, to free the subject from rationalist constraints, purposiveness and the necessities of labour and utility.[121] The end result is often a fundamentally solitary and depoliticized subject who either has abandoned the prospect of genuine social change, of "emancipation," or one who cannot find the glue which might produce social linkages. Consequently, in Habermas' view the "young conservatives" tend comfortably to coexist with more traditional advocates of the status quo. These tenets of postmodernism come at a historic period when African and Native Americans, postcolonial subjects and/or women or other heretofore excluded social groups are more fully understanding and expressing themselves as subjects. Thus, the postmodern claims can appear to subvert this process before it is fully realized. However, this need not be the case.

---

[121] See Wolin's "Introduction" to Habermas' The New Conservatism, xxi-xxvi.

Eloise A. Burker has suggested three ways that postmodern thinking can enhance analyses. First, by decentering "the" subject, it allows the examination of "the multiplicity of ways in which subjects are constructed -- gender, race, sexual orientation, class, age, physical attributes, religion, political ideologies" and so on.[122] This recognition can be the basis of consciousness and political collaboration for change.[123] Postmodern critiques provide the critical space to understand how and in what way such categories intersect, conflict or remain ambiguous. Second, the postmodern critique of language and the way it is used to maintain systems of domination is also useful since it can encourage representations which subvert domination. Third, the postmodern critique of epistemology, as Burker articulated it, does not fall into a "know-nothing relativism" as Habermas claimed, but instead expressed the problems inherent in universal claims which do not understand differences in gender, class, language, culture, history and how any or all of these shape what is understood as knowledge.[124] As such, it may be more accurate to state that some articulations of postmodernism can be conservative and hence result in the preservation of the status quo, but not necessarily. In each chapter to follow, I will take care to point out in what ways, if any, postmodern tenets can be useful.

---

[122] Burker, "Should Feminism Appropriate Postmodernism?" Women/Politics, Newletter of the Organized Section for Women & Politics Research 4, 1 (August, 1992), 6.

[123] bell hooks, "The Politics of Radical Black Subjectivity" (15-22) and "Postmodern Blackness" (23-31) in Yearning: race, gender and cultural politics (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990).

[124] Burker, "Should Feminism Appropriate Postmodernism?," 7-8; also, Linda J. Nicolson, ed., Feminism/Postmodernism (New York:

For the moment, the first two forms of conservatism are more relevant for understanding the prevailing ideology of United States foreign policymakers. There is a tendency to harken back nostalgically to some past, truly mythical order. However, the questions which remain unanswered are: what aspects of the past do conservatives want to resurrect: colonization and genocide of Native Americans? The enslavement of Africans of the diaspora? The subjugation of women? The free reign of conquest and interventions in Latin America? Postmodernism as Burker articulated it, is useful for critiquing this ideology that implicitly seeks to preserve an (universal) order in which some states dominate and others are dominated/subordinated. Despite periodic discontinuities in ideological commitments, the continuities, as Chomsky consistently points out, are more stark.[125] The features of old and new conservatism which are the foundation of United States foreign policy in Central America centre around the notions of order, stability and an abhorrence of the kinds of changes associated with revolutions or liberation struggles. In this "order" everything has its place: individuals, races or ethnicities, classes and nation-states. As

---

Routledge, 1990).

[125] Chomsky, On Power and Ideology, 5.

will be shown, this view is evident in the thinking and in the policy directives of a number of influential Carter and Reagan Administration policymakers.

Among old conservatives there is a strong tendency to glorify and, in the process, mystify the past by reinterpreting it in a positive or favourable (heroic, noble) light. This mysticism made it "impossible" for them to understand the fury of the new social movements -- the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the gay and lesbian movements, First Nations activism and the environmental movements -- which shattered the conservative illusion of an ordered, affluent and wholesome society.[126] These "incomprehensible" movements were interpreted as an indication of the "inflation" of expectation, of the crisis of legitimacy and the rising condition of ungovernability.[127] The latter simply meant that those who were heretofore excluded and now wanted in were seen as disrupters. Those in/with power were not prepared to make redresses in any meaningful sense. Redress would have required them to acknowledge guilt, culpability, to accept some responsibility, to show remorse for past and present injustices from which they benefit; it has been only a few of those in power who have demonstrated the ability to feel/do. This is clearly the case Habermas makes about the revisionist writings on the holocaust and the culpability of German citizens. It is also interesting to note that within the United States, many of the 1950s liberals and even Marxists became 1980s neoconservatives -- Norman Podhoretz, Irving Kristol, Seymour Martin Lipset, Edward Shils and Daniel Bell -- and helped to decenter the influence of the liberal establishment as well as to pave the way for a formidable conservatism in United States society.[128] Their "disappointment" with liberalism and its inability to confront the 1960s radicalism gave way to the abandonment of the Democratic Party, although the latter is hardly the centre of radicalism.

---

[126] Janice Doane & Devon Hodges, "Feminism and the Decline of America" (47-61) in Nostalgia And Sexual Difference: The Resistance to Contemporary Feminism (New York: Methuen, 1987).

[127] Habermas, "Neoconservative Cultural Criticism in the United States and West Germany" (1982) in The New Conservatism, 24-27; for the trend in Britain, see Brian Elliott and David McCrone, "Class, culture and morality: a sociological analysis of neo-conservatism," The Sociological Review 35, 3 (August, 1987), 485-515.

The emergence of the Reagan and, later, the George Bush Administrations (1989-1992) represented only one outgrowth of a truly remarkable ideological shift entailing old and new conservatives and recycled liberals and Marxists.[129] These neoconservatives are not to be confused with the populism of the New Right since the former strongly advocated the theory of democratic rule by elites;

---

[128] See for example, Edward Shils' earlier Marxist conception of ideology in Daedalus 103, 1 (Winter, 1974), 87f; and Daniel Bell's dubiously entitled The End of Ideology.

[129] Reagan's early advance was assisted by old conservatives such as the Catholic William Buckley and Protestant Fundamentalism led by the likes of the Reverends Pat Robinson and Jerry Falwell; Habermas, The New Conservatism, 22-23. Their ideological extremism, however, was to prove to be a hindrance for Bush in 1991. Democrat Bill Clinton won on a promise of moderation, change and inclusion.

participation by citizens was considered "excessive" and antithetical to good and orderly government. This domestic vision was mirrored in the thinking on foreign policy, including Reagan's belief that Congress, the constitutional representatives of the people and the states, had no right to "interfere" in foreign policy. The old conservatives maintained their illusion of a past just society and successfully marginalized the generators of change by casting them as the generators of disorder.

On the foreign policy front, old and new conservatives found common cause in pointing the finger at an outside agitator as the cause of disorder. Two interesting phenomena occurred. First, the ideology of anticommunism advocated by Carter, Reagan and Bush was encapsulated in theories of totalitarianism. The latter came into vogue in the 1950s as a means of negating the "enemy's" political system. Second, the complete negation of totalitarian regimes -- in the post-World War II period the archetype became the Soviet Union -- was simultaneously an affirmation of the goodness of the United States' regime. By critiquing the nature of "the other's" regime as lacking, those within the United States were "encouraged" to celebrate their good fortunes. Dissenters within the United States became traitors and this was exemplified by McCarthyism and efforts to "ferret out" communists through the Committee on Un-American Activities,[130] the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) efforts to delegitimize the civil rights movement by calling it communist-inspired, and in more recent times, efforts to delegitimize the women's movements as anti-traditional (anti-men) and the cause of social and moral decay.[131] Given the conservative illusion that governability required elite rule and that the United States was already better than "the rest," conservatives interpreted dissenters as irrational, unpatriotic and traitors to the nation-state.

---

[130] Frank J. Donner, The Un-Americans (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1961).

This effort to delegitimize dissenters derives from two interrelated phenomena, namely the crisis of legitimacy and the need of governments to justify themselves, at least to their own citizens. Notwithstanding the acceptance of elite rule, this idea of the crisis of legitimacy speaks to the fact that governments, through propaganda, sought to legitimate themselves intellectually to the body politic. This legitimation has taken wide-ranging ideological forms for both democratic and dictatorial regimes.[132] It has required greater interaction between governments and the mechanisms of communication, especially media, and this was aptly illustrated in the effectiveness of the Reagan Administration in using the media to disseminate its fabrications and to sustain support for questionable foreign adventures. The general absence of anything resembling investigative journalism by the dominant corporate media has produced a number of critical commentaries including Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman's insightful text on the political-economy of the media, Manufacturing Consent.[133] Given the corporate and establishment interests of mass media, it is invariably the case that reports on major foreign policy events do not contradict those of the political elites. This was evidently the case in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and throughout the world.

---

[131] See Doane and Hodges, "Feminism and the Decline of America" (47-61) and "The Anxiety of Feminist Influence" (81-93) in Nostalgia and Sexual Difference.

[132] Bracher, The Age of Ideologies, 2.

This media complicity coincides with a development that Karl Dietrich Bracher described as one in which "[P]olitics has become communications in the sense that the formation of 'public opinion' through the mass media has assumed decisive importance."[134] Of particular import to this analysis, Bracher aptly notes that public opinion is impotent in the face of regimes which deploy their power to use ideas "without much regard to truth or otherwise and which are capable of manipulating public opinion in such a way that it tends to become 'publicized' or fabricated opinion."[135] This move of governments into the arena of communication as a means of intellectually justifying their legitimacy through the dissemination of ideas is no more than calculated power politics. The use of modern communications technology makes it difficult to talk coherently about political events and to deconstruct lies in the twentieth century.

---

[133] Chomsky and Herman, Manufacturing Consent (New York: Pantheon, 1988).

[134] Bracher, The Age of Ideologies, 3.

[135] Bracher, The Age of Ideologies, 3.

The fabricated stories and opinions ranging from cultural and nationalistic propaganda to psychological warfare and disinformation make claims of objectivity and truth exceptionally difficult in local, national and international politics. And, perhaps, this is where a postmodern critique opens up the space in which this phenomenon can be interrogated and the pretensions of objectivity and truth can be illuminated. Certainly the ability of mass media to cross boundaries makes the analyses which imply a distinctive national or international space somewhat artificial.[136]

Given the conservative ideology that multiple internal demands on the state cause ungovernability, as well as the idea that elite rule is the best, then it is not surprising that these ideas spill over into matters of foreign policy.[137] An understanding of the neo-conservative conception of democracy as one in which an elite govern, makes it easier to see why elite foreign policymakers within the United States often do not see any incompatibility between supporting "democracy" at home and dictatorships abroad. Insofar as dictatorships or authoritarian rule maintain order and stability in their home states, and thereby the international equilibrium or order, then such rulers are considered by the United States policy makers as consistent with tradition. Thus, there is clearly a contra/diction in the understanding of "home" and what it means for citizens in the centre versus what it means for those within the periphery. The United States foreign policy tradition toward Central America has been one of imperialism, domination and control and although the degrees may have changed periodically, the overall policy has remained very consistent.[138] As such, the maintenance of tradition and order necessarily entails the maintenance of United States hegemony over the Central American isthmus.

---

[136] Chomsky, "Political discourse and the propoganda system" (October 24, 1986) in Language and Politics, ed., C.P. Otero (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988), 662-697.

[137] Chomsky, "Techniques of marginalization" (January 24, 1988) in Language and Politics, ed. Otero, 698-721.

Among critical theorists, some stand out as most insistent in challenging this neoconservative and imperialist conception of democracy and order. For Habermas it is antithetical to emancipation and to notions of justice and a sense of equality and fairness. Theorists such as Habermas and Chomsky recognize the pressing need to end the contra/dictions engendered by United States foreign policies which allow support, for example, of regimes implicated in death squad activites, excessive brutality and crimes against humanity.[139]

The existence of conservative ideas was evident in United States foreign policy toward Nicaragua, and the remainder of this thesis will be a critical narration and discussion of how this ideology was deployed to preserve United States power/dominance.

---

[138] Chomsky, Turning the Tide, esp. Chapters 1-3 and 5.

[139] Chomsky, On Power and Ideology, 5-26.

In the next chapter, I look at the Carter Administration and what I characterize as the "ma(s)king of the *Contra*/revolution. By ma(s)king I mean the simultaneous process in which the *Sandinistas* were engaged in making a Revolution, and the Carter Administration and like-minded Nicaraguan conservatives were engaged in subverting the Revolution and when this failed, directed their energies toward ma(s)king a counterrevolution.

"La sangre de otros/The Blood of Others"

Leo los poemas de los muertos
yo que estoy viva
yo que viví para reírme y llorar
y gritar Patria Libre o Morir
sobre un camión
el día que llegamos a Managua.

Leo los poemas de los muertos,
veo las hormigas sobre la grama,
mis pies descalzos,
tu pelo lacio,
espalda encorvada sobre la reunión.

Leo los poemas de los muertos
y siento que esta sangre con que nos amamos,
no nos pertenece.

I read the poems of the dead.
I survived.
I lived to laugh and cry
and I shouted *Patria Libre O Morir*
from the back of a truck
the day we reached Managua.

I read the poems of the dead,
watching the ants on the grass,
my bare feet,
your straight hair,
your back arched at the meeting.

I read the poems of the dead.
Does the blood in our bodies that lets us love each other
belong to us?

Gioconda Belli
From Eve's Rib (1989)
trans. Steven F. White.

Chapter III

The Ma(s)king of the Nicaraguan Revolution: Carter, Somoza and the *Sandinistas*

> Greater responsibility must rest upon overall U.S. policy in Latin America. This policy has generally equated verbal opposition to America's current enemies, be they Fascist, as they were until 1945, or Communist as they have been since, with a convergency of interests and, consequently, has led to American nurture, support, and defense of the Guardia and the Somozas on repeat occasions...The dynasty has been remarkably successful in equating opposition to their rule with opposition to the United States.
>
> Richard Millet,
> *Guardians of the Dynasty* (1977).

> The fact that the American Revolution was imperfect, marred by slavery and deep social inequalities, would not have justified a counter-revolution organized by a foreign power invoking *un*democratic aspects of American life.
>
> Carlos Fuentes
> *Latin America* (1985).

III.1. Introduction

On July 19, 1979, the *Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional* (FSLN), commonly referred to as the *Sandinistas*, emerged victorious from an 18-year struggle against the dictatorship of General Anastasio Somoza García, and his two sons, Luís "Tacho" and Anastasio Somoza Debayle. The "triumph," as it was to become known, was followed by a Government for Reconstruction, the most influential members of which were either *Sandinistas* or other anti-*Somocistas*. These included Daniel Ortega from the *Sandinistas*, Moises Hassan from the grassroots United Peoples Movement (MPU) which was aligned with the *Sandinistas*, Alfonso Robelo and Violeta Barrios de Chamorro from the conservative opposition groups, and the internationally renowned novelist, Sergio Ramírez.

The official United States position was one of support for the new Nicaraguan government. However, this was contradicted by covert activities authorized by the Carter Administration in 1978 and 1980.[1] Carter's 1978 covert authorization occurred one year after he came to power and one year before the triumph; it gave the CIA the power and money to develop a more conservative alternative to the *Sandinistas*. It might be argued that this was not necessarily anti-*Sandinista*. However, given the fact that the latter were already widely acknowledged to be the principal heirs to political power within a post-Somoza Nicaragua, and in fact had been fighting precisely to achieve this objective, then Carter's authorization for an alternative was implicitly a rejection of the *Sandinistas*. This quest for an alternative was the root of the CIA's network which eventually produced the *Contras*.[2] It gave the CIA the power to subvert the *Sandinistas*, to deny Nicaraguans their subjectivity and fundamentally, to pre-empt any illusions of Nicaraguan sovereignty or aspirations for self-determination. Through the use of bribes, promises of military and economic support, and sometimes simply out of chance, the CIA was able to coopt a number of disgruntled *Sandinistas* and collaborators. The anti-*Sandinista* recruits included *Commandante Cero* Eden Pastora Gómez, Arturo Cruz, Alfonso Robelo Callejas, Edgar Chamorro, and Violeta Barrios de Chamorro.[3] These influential Nicaraguans were presented to the United States population as "moderate" alternatives and disinformation by foreign policymakers led many observers to believe that they had become known only during the Reagan years.[4]

---

[1] John Brecher, John Walcott, David Martin and Beth Nissen, "A Secret War for Nicaragua," Newsweek (November 8, 1982), 48; Woodward, Veil, 113.

[2] R. Matthews, "The CIA War," NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August, 1986), 19; R. Pastor, Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 238, 319; B. Woodward, Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 113, 174.

In Condemned to Repetition, Robert Pastor, who at that time was the Director of Latin American and Caribbean Affairs on the National Security Council, pointed out that both the Carter Administration and the CIA, in their pre-triumph efforts, had attempted to maneuver against the *Sandinistas* by proffering some of these names to Somoza and/or to the Organization of American States.[5] For example, the United States Embassy in Managua had depicted Robelo as right of centre and "moderate." The same chart depicted the *Frente Sandinista* as being on the extreme left and "radical."[6] The chart homogenized all the *Sandinistas*; it made no nuanced reference to the fact that there were three ideological and tactical "tendencies" among them. It also ignored or hid from knowledge the existence of the Popular Action Movement/Marxist-Leninist (MAP/ML) party founded in 1970; the Communist Party of Nicaragua (PCdeN) which resulted from a split with the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN) in 1970; the PSN had been founded in 1944, some 20 years before the *Frente Sandinista*.[7] By leaving out the existence of the latter three parties, the Managua Embassy during the Carter Administration effectively obscured the spectrum of political ideologies within Nicaragua and, additionally, based on this inaccurate spectrum, could depict right-wing Nicaraguans as "moderate" and leftists as "extreme" or "radical." Thus, before the triumph, disinformation was already being disseminated. Further, an anti-*Sandinista* opposition was being "cultivated" and "managed" by the United States. In order to clarify these claims, I want to shift the analysis to a more specific assessment of events culminating in the triumph and how the Carter Administration responded to those events.

---

[3] Woodward, Veil, 236-237.

[4] Jane Deighton, Rossana Horsley, Sarah Stewart & Cathy Cain, Sweet Ramparts: Women in Revolutionary Nicaragua (Birmingham: Third World Publications, 1983), 22-26.

[5] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 138-159.

---

[6] See chart in Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 96.

[7] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 275-276; "Nicaragua's 1984 Elections: A History Worth the Retelling," Envio, 9, 102 (January, 1990), 22-34.

Particularly throughout 1978 and 1979, the Carter Administration was engaged in a number of activities, mostly tentative and ineffectual, to remove Somoza. These activities were fuelled by the objective events within Nicaragua which included armed insurrections. There was a massive political opposition to the dictator to which the latter reacted with increased brutality. Early in the year, January 9, 1978, Dr. Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal, the husband of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, was assassinated.[8] Chamorro Cardenal, with the assistance of his brother Xavier Chamorro, was the editor of the newspaper La Prensa. It had become increasingly critical of the Somoza dictatorship and the brutality of the National Guards. Only three months before his assassination, the renowned journalist had received the Maria Moors Cabot Prize from Colombia University for "distinguished journalistic contributions to the advancement of inter-American understanding."[9] Traditionally a Conservative, Chamorro had become the leader of the Democratic Liberation Union (UDEL) on December 15, 1974. His break with his traditional party came after the Conservatives created an alliance with the Somoza Liberals to form the Conservative National Action Party.[10]

---

[8] Thomas W. Walker, Nicaragua: Land of Sandino, 2nd edn. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), 34.

[9] Walker, Nicaragua, 34.

[10] Henri Weber, Nicaragua: The Sandinista Revolution (London: Verso Editions, 1981), 39.

Chamorro Cardenal's opposition to the Somoza regime had been voiced both within Nicaragua and internationally. For example, on February 11, 1976, Chamorro Cardenal gave sworn testimony to the House Subcommittee on International Organizations stating that while he was imprisoned by Somoza, he witnessed a number of human rights violations. This was consistent with an Amnesty International submission detailing the names and acts of torture of prisoners in Nicaragua's *El Modelo* Prison.[11] The Subcommittee report also included the names of over 50 Guardsmen who were known to be engaged in systematic human rights abuses.[12] Moreover, just one week prior to his assassination, Pedro Joaquín and his brother Xavier Chamorro, met with the *Frente Sandinista*. In Xavier's words, it was a meeting to "solidify this broad coalition of all forces opposing the dictatorship."[13] Xavier stated that "[I]f anything, the murder of my brother raised the consciousness of the people and solidified opposition to the dictatorship" including people from all walks of life.[14] It is generally believed that Chamorro Cardenal's death was the result of a Somoza order despite the fact that his eldest son, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Barrios, believed Somoza was not responsible.[15]

---

[11] "Human Rights in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Policy," Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on International Relations, Congressional Records-House, 94th Congress, 2nd Session (June 8 and 9, 1976), 164-167, 171-173.

[12] For e.g. Gen. Samuel Genie, Chief of the Office of Security (G-2); Col. Orlando Wheelock, Chief of Police of Managua; Col. Orlando Gutierrez; Col. Edmundo Meneses; Col. Gonzalo Everest, Commander of the Military zone of the northern area; Lt. Col. Bayardo Jiron, Executive Officer in Rio Blanco; Col. Alesio Gutierrez, Department Commander of Jinotega; Col. Jeronimo Linarte, Office of Security; Col. Alfredo Juarez; Col. Miguel Blessing; Col. Pablo Zamora; Col. Gregorio Pichardo; Col. Ivan Allegrett; Col. Alfonso Urbina; Lt. Col. Juan Lee Wong, Office of Security; Maj. Jacobo Ortegaray; Maj. Luis Villalobos; Maj. Melville Hodgson; Maj. Edgard Altamirano; Capt. Sergio Calderon; and from the "shock troops": Lt. Raul "Fallon" Sanchez; Lt. Nahun "Pantera" Zeledon; Lt. Oscar "Gigante" Bello; Lt. Franklin "Mariposa" Montenegro; Lt. Hilario Bayer; Lt. Isidora Lopez. See, "Human Rights in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Policy" (1976), 30-31.

Nicaraguans were outraged at this latest act of brutality and the opposition to Somoza, including demonstrations and strikes, increased on all fronts. In Managua, angry protestors burned businesses owned by Somoza. The assassination also encouraged the political mobilization among the generally more conservative elements of Nicaraguan society. For example, Alfonso Robelo, then President of the Higher Council of Economic Enterprise (COSEP), Nicaragua's main business association along with the UDEL, organized a strike which lasted from January 23 to mid-February.[16] At the time, Somoza claimed it "was a strike of millionaires who have forgotten that my government assured them the social peace necessary to build up their fortunes."[17] Other conservative business associations, perhaps conceding Somoza's claims, did not bother to join in the strike, effectively dividing the middle class opposition. In contrast, the *Sandinistas* seized the opportunity to increase popular insurrection, and increasingly the striking workers aligned themselves with the Ortega-led *Tercerista* faction. The United States Embassy, anticipating yet another futile effort to dislodge Somoza, encouraged COSEP and UDEL to end the strike.[18]

---

[13] "A Free Press or Censorship?," Philip Zwerling's interview with Xavier Chamorro; in Philip Zwerling and Connie Martin, Nicaragua, A New Kind of Revolution (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1985), 180-181.

[14] Xavier interviewed in Zwerling and Martin, Nicaragua, 180-181.

[15] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 59. In a subsequent trial in June 1981, a Cuban exile, Pedro Ramos, and eight Nicaraguans were found guilty. See Pastor, 334n32; and Latin American Weekly Report (June 26, 1981), 12.

[16] George Black, Triumph of the People (London: Zed Press, 1981), 111; Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 59.

These independent events within Nicaragua increasingly provided Carter with ammunition against Somoza but he often seemed ambivalent about precisely which strategy was best: loyalty to a repressive dictatorship friendly to the United States or adherence to a principle of justice and commitment to human rights. It was clear that Carter recognized Somoza was a liability who should no longer be supported. However, recognizing that the *Sandinistas* might be on the verge of victory in 1978, the Carter Administration also did everything possible to obstruct their efforts without appearing to be too hostile lest they should succeed. Although the brutality of the Somoza regime made him a liability, the *Sandinistas'* radical nationalism was considered sufficient for deeming them unreliable as potential allies. There was also lingering doubt in the Carter Administration as to whether Somoza would voluntarily leave office, as well as doubt about the strength and political loyalties of the internal opposition attempting to dislodge him from power.[19] Perhaps this inability to fully grasp the volatility of events within Nicaragua accounts for Carter's actions, which contradicted his expressed respect for human rights. This contradiction demands critique.

---

[17] Black, Triumph of the People, 111.

[18] Black, Triumph of the People, 111-112.

III.2. Carter's Contra/dictions

Carter's relationship with Somoza was rife with contradictions. It made a farce out of the expressed commitment to human rights. First, despite the human rights directives outlined from 1973 to 1976 in the Foreign Assistance Acts of Nixon and Ford, or Carter's own speeches which outlined reasons for denying aid to human rights violators, Carter rejected suspending aid to the dictator in 1978.[20] Between the Administrations of Nixon and Carter (1968 to 1978), the United States' military aid was over 20 million dollars; Nicaragua was also the recipient of the largest per capita aid in the region. In 1977, Somoza had received three million in military aid and 15 million dollars in "humanitarian" aid. This was followed in September, 1978 with another two and one-half million dollars credit agreement between Nicaragua and the United States.[21] While these numbers may seem small, the International Peace Research Institute in Stockholm, Sweden found that 98 per cent of military aid to the Somoza dictatorship, especially between 1978 and 1979, came via Israel and Argentina, and as I pointed out earlier, the same pattern existed for Guatemala and El Salvador.[22] Aid to Somoza, accompanied by disinformation, continued as per usual despite his human rights violations.

---

[19] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, xiii. Ironically, this claim also was made by Anastasio Somoza Debayle after his defeat in his book, Nicaragua Betrayed (Boston: Western Islands, 1980).

[20] Pearce, Urder the Eagle, 123.

In February, 1978, only one month after the assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, in a testimony before a House Subcommittee, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Sally Shelton claimed that the National Guards "thus far reacted in a generally restrained manner" since the assassination. In her view, the Guards were conscientiously fulfilling "a duty to protect the population from terrorism and acts of violence."[23] These claims defy words; they contradict the independent findings of a host of human rights agencies and a spectrum of opposition reports from within

---

[21] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 118-119.

[22] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 137-143; Pearce, Under the Eagle, 120; Karl Bermann, Under the Big Stick: Nicaragua and the United States Since 1848 (Boston: South End Press, 1986), 265.

[23] House, Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Year 1979, Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations, 95th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Publishing, 1978), 126-127.

Nicaragua.[24] Shelton claimed that the continued aid for the dictator was necessary because it "[helped] to maintain our cooperative political relationship with that country."[25]

Second, not only did the Carter Administration reject suspending aid to Somoza, it also did not oppose aid from various international financial institutions. In May, 1978, the Inter-American Development Bank approved a 32 million dollar loan for the Somoza regime.[26] The loan was one of those ambiguous allocations; it was earmarked for the construction of a road ("infrastructure development") connecting two military garrisons. More problematic, Jenny Pearce pointed out that in that very area, over 600 peasants had died at the hands of the National Guards between 1975 and 1978.

Third, it became known on August 1, 1978 that Carter had sent a letter to Somoza which congratulated him on an improved human rights record.[27] This puzzled actors on all sides of the struggle and even Somoza probably thought it was an endorsement of his regime; in the eyes of anti-*Somocistas*, Carter lost considerable credibility. This playing of all sides created confusion for both *Somocistas* and *Sandinistas*. At least one thing is clear: in the immediate period before the triumph, the Carter Administration was manuevering against both Somoza and the *Sandinistas*. Somoza became an embarrassment to the Carter Administration especially given its expressed commitment to human rights. Yet only after the international spotlight was focussed on the extreme brutality and widespread corruption of the Somoza regime did Carter reduce economic and military aid to the dictator. More problematic, the termination and reduction of aid was reversed in the months just preceding the triumph. Fourth, Somoza visited Washington in August 1978 and subsequently three loans from private banks were secured: for 40, 50 and 60 million dollars.[28] This political and economic support called into question Carter's human rights claims and the belief that his Administration took seriously the corruption and brutality of the Guards or the dictatorship itself.

---

[24] Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 264-265; Doris Tijerino, Inside the Nicaraguan Revolution; Millett, Guardians of the Dynasty.

[25] House, Foreign Assistance Legislation (1979), 128, 130-131.

[26] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 123.

[27] E. Bradford Burns, "Obsessed with Nicaragua," At War in Nicaragua: The Reagan Doctrine and the Politics of Nostalgia (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 19; Walker, Nicaragua, 36.

Fifth, Carter's early efforts to obstruct, then subvert, the *Sandinistas'* rise to power were mobilized on a number of fronts. In 1978, Carter authorized the CIA to provide support, including some one million dollars, to "moderates," (that is, not the *Sandinistas*) within Nicaragua opposed to Somoza.[29] This is the first explicitly anti-*Sandinista* act which stands out as instrumental. Carter knew the *Sandinistas* were a force in Nicaraguan politics that simply could not be ignored. At the same time, Carter's actions trivialized the meaning of the

---

[28] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 124.

[29] Brecher et al, "A Secret War for Nicaragua," 48; Matthews, "The CIA's War," 20.

Sandinistas, in both symbolic and instrumental terms, for the Nicaraguans who supported them. It was straight power politics which undergirded Carter's authorizing of the CIA to focus on alternatives despite the views of the Nicaraguan citizens.

III.3. The Making of a *Sandinista* Revolution

Recognizing they could not rely on the United States to persuade "its dictator" to leave, the *Sandinistas* launched a number of military offensives in August 1978. On August 22, 1978 a squadron of *Sandinista* guerrilla cadres donned the attire of the National Guard, entered the National Palace in the heart of downtown Managua, and took it over.[30] The guerrilla cadres were led by *Commandante Cero* Eden Pastora and his second-in-command *Commandante* Dora Maria Tellez; in the months following, most United States observers focused exclusively on Pastora, ignoring one of Nicaragua's most famous women guerrillas.[31] In part, this was due to the fact that Pastora pulled a *coup de theatre* and removed his mask at the airport. However, even in the aftermath Tellez' participation was mentioned only tangentially by some commentators despite her interviews with Margaret Randall and others. In any event, at that time, what Bermann called "Somoza's rubber stamped Congress" was in session and, ironically, in the process of approving the aid package offered by the Carter Administration in May. In total, the guerrilla cadres held hostage 1,500 people including several of Somoza's relatives and 49 National Congress deputies. The takeover lasted two days, through intense negotiations; the world watched via television. In the end, the guerrillas exchanged the 1,500 hostages for 59 *Sandinista* political prisoners, including the sole remaining founding member of the *Frente Sandinista* Tomas Borge, 500,000 dollars in cash and a guaranteed plane ride to Panama. The takeover had been a success, and in Panama, Pastora stated that the reason the *Sandinistas* decided to strike then was because "we saw the determination of the United States to keep Somoza in power until 1981 [scheduled elections].[32]

---

[30] Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 267.

[31] See, "The [Women] Commanders," in Margaret Randall, Sandino's Daughters: Testimonies of Nicaraguan Women in Struggle, ed. Lynda Yanz (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981), 40-79; and William I. Robinson and Kent Norsworthy, David and Goliath: The U.S. War Against Nicaragua (New York: Monthly Review, 1987), 66-71.

As the motorcade of guerrillas left the National Palace, the Managua streets were lined with cheering spectators. This eventually spilled over into spontaneous insurrections, strikes and mass demonstrations. One report in the US News and World Report posed the question, "[C]ould the United States continue to support a government opposed by a nearly united people demanding an end to the dictatorship and what is called Latin America's 'biggest private ranch'?"[33] However, one foreign policymaker claimed that the United States no longer did "that [intervened as in Guatemala and Dominican Republic] sort of thing" but another perhaps captured a more accurate sentiment, namely the fear that "[W]hat emerges from the debris 'could be worse ["radical"] than what we have now.'"[34] The National Guards eventually crushed the insurrections leading to the following report:

---

[32] Washington Post (September 3, 1978), C4; Dietrich, Somoza, 176-188; Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 267.

[33] US News quoted in Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 267.

> Washington, fearing 'another Cuba,' is searching for stability rather than for social and economic change or even human rights--repeating, as they see it, American policy during its occupation of Nicaragua between 1912 and 1933, and its subsequent support for the Somoza family. Nicaraguans note that the Carter Administration was silent when the National Guard killed 3,000 people in crushing the September insurrection, but moved quickly to mediate when it recognized the popularity of the Sandinist guerrillas.[35]

The Carter Administration perceived the *Sandinistas* to be antithetical to the United States' interests because according to the Managua Embassy they were "radical" and "too friendly" toward the Soviet Union and Cuba. This meant the *Sandinistas* were not aligned strictly with the United States. The fact that Nicaraguan leaders could not choose their own allies contradicted any United States claim of supporting freedom, democracy or national self-determination; Carter wanted Nicaragua to be a neocolony of the United States. As discussed in Chapter One, the idea of self-determination without the basic domestic choice of determining who will govern is a contradiction in terms. Further, even after the

---

[34] Carl J. Migdail, "Nicaragua: Cuba All Over Again," US News and World Report (September 11, 1978), 37.

[35] Alan Riding, The New York Times (December 17, 1978), IV, 3; also Bernard Dietrich, Somoza and the Legacy of U.S. Involvement in Central America (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981), 211-213; Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 269.

Carter Administration noticed the will of the Nicaraguan people appeared to favour the *Sandinistas*, it still moved to manage an alternative to the *Sandinistas*.

Paradoxically, then, the Carter Administration's opposition to the *Sandinistas* was mounted despite the latter's apparent domestic popularity; they were opposed because of their Marxist ideology and foreign relations with Cuba. This speaks to the absence of subjective determination by Nicaraguan citizens as well as leaders and, further, the fact that they were both a means to an end, namely preserving United States power/domination. That is, the Carter Administration's maneuvering was concerned with ensuring an outcome which would preserve the prevailing balance of power and relations between the United States and Nicaragua; this could be done more easily with a "friendly" government in power in Nicaragua. In effect, when both Somoza and the *Sandinistas* held separate press conferences on September 1, 1978, and suggested they were being double-crossed, what they both suggested was happening was indeed true.

On the one hand, at his press conference, Somoza claimed that he had been a loyal ally to the United States but that the Carter Administration had betrayed this relationship in its attempt to remove him from power. At the time, these claims seemed like the extraordinary denial of the end by yet another dictator. Somoza was "passing the buck" for the widespread insurrections and broad-based opposition to his government. On the other hand, the *Sandinistas'* position was voiced at a press conference in

Honduras by celebrated *Commandante* Dora Maria Tellez. According to Robert Pastor, "The Sandinistas [Tellez] accused the United States of sending mercenaries and CIA agents to prevent their victory."[36] At that time, these claims were readily interpreted as the paranoia of misguided guerrillas. However, both Somoza and the *Sandinistas* were right in pointing to some kind of double-dealing ("mediation") by United States foreign policymakers.

In October 1978 the *Sandinistas* took the diplomatic offensive internationally. What was to become known as *Los Doce* ("Group of Twelve")[37] had become central to the *Sandinistas* since late in 1977 when they were recruited. Then, on October 15, 1977, *Los Doce* simultaneously issued a statement in Washington, D.C. and

---

[36] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, xiii.

[37] **The Group of Twelve arose after meetings with Humberto Ortega and Sergio Ramírez Mercado* of the** *Terceristas* and Joaquín Cuadra Chamorro,* a wealthy lawyer with the Bank of America and the Nicaragua Sugar Company; Emilio Baltodano Pallais,* Manager of Cafe Soluble Inc., an important Nicaraguan industry; Felipe Mantica Abaunza,* a supermarket chain owner who was on the Board of the Bank of America; Father Fernando Cardenal S.J.,* a professor at the Central American University; Ernesto Castillo Martínez* a lawyer in exile in Costa Rica (his bookstore had carried Jaime Wheelock's banned book, Imperialismo and Dictadura). Later, others included Ricardo Coronel Kautz, a farming engineer; Father Miguel D'Escoto Brockman,* who was then with the World Council of Churches in New York as communications secretary; Carlos Tunnerman Bernheim,* a former President of Nicaragua's National Autonomous University (UNAN). In Mexico meetings included José Benito Escobar; Arturo Cruz,* then working at the Interamerican Development Bank in Washington, D.C.; Carlos Gutíerrez Sotelo,* a dental surgeon in Mexico, and Casimiro Sotelo F.,* an architect living in California. Leiken and Rubin, The Central American Crisis Reader (New York: Summit Books, 1987), 170-172. The * indicates the final Group of Twelve.

Costa Rica to the effect that: "[Th]ere can be no permanent solution to the escalating armed conflict, which now threatens to envelop all of Nicaragua, without the participation of the Sandinista National Liberation Front."[38] The Group of Twelve included businessmen, priests, lawyers and teachers. One member, Arturo Cruz, is important to discuss because he became a central link between the State Department and the *Sandinistas*, and he eventually joined the *Contras*.

Arturo Cruz was at that time working at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, D.C., the bank which had granted Somoza a loan to construct roads connecting military garrisons.[39] The impetus for the Group of Twelve had come from the *Terceristas*, one of three *Sandinista* groups which had first separated and then begun to collaborate again by the late-1970s. The *Terceristas* were comprised mostly of intellectuals and included the brothers Humberto and Daniel Ortega; they had been accused by the other *Sandinista* groups of lacking ideological consistency. The two brothers had asked the Nicaraguan poet and novelist Sergio Ramirez (who had just returned from studying and teaching in Europe), to organize "an alliance with the democratic sectors of the national bourgeoisie" with the objective of establishing the international legitimacy of the *Sandinistas.*[40]

---

[38] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 58; Leiken and Rubin, The Central American Crisis Reader, 172-173.

[39] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 58.

This was Cruz's first collaboration with the *Sandinistas.* It was estimated that in the 25 years between 1960 and 1985, Cruz spent only about one year in Nicaragua.[41] The following year, on 29 June 1978, Cruz, still a member of the Group of Twelve and working in Washington, D.C., met with the Director of Central American Affairs in the State Department.[42] Cruz's recommendation to the State Department was not consistent with the *Sandinistas'* rationale for initiating the Group of Twelve: to obtain international recognition for the *Sandinistas'* legitimate right to form the next government and, additionally, to destroy institutions such as the National Guard because they were inextricably linked to the maintenance of the dictator. It was anticipated that the loyalty of the Guards to Somoza, cultivated over its sixty-year history, would make the Guards impossible to bring under alternative national leadership. Nevertheless, Cruz suggested to the State Department the need for a "neutral force [to] stand temporarily between the National Guard and the Sandinistas."[43] While acknowledging the *Sandinistas'* determination to dismantle the National Guard and replace it with a

---

[40] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 58; Pilar Arias, Nicaragua: Revolucion, Relatos de Combatientes del Frente Sandinista (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1981), 129-133.

[41] Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 66.

[42] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 155.

[43] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 155.

Sandinista popularly recruited militia, Cruz told the State Department that he thought "that a compromise [could] possibly be found providing a role for the untainted elements of the present Guard."[44] Thus Cruz' position was more consistent with the position of the Carter Administration, which wanted to keep the Guard intact, and circumvent the *Sandinistas'* total victory. It was less consistent with the *Sandinistas'* goals of taking power and destroying the Guard.

During a meeting with various Latin American leaders, including Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo Odio and former president Jose Figures, as well as Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez on July 10, the *Sandinistas* proposed a "Plan to Achieve Peace" and transfer power from Somoza to a Government for Reconstruction via the Nicaraguan Congress.[45] A major feature of that plan was to dissolve the Guard and a second, to identify an interim Cabinet. During mediations backed by the United States and its allies from Guatemala and the Dominican Republic in October, 1978 between *Los Doce*, Somoza and the United States State Department, efforts were made to marginalize the leftist elements of the *Sandinistas*. The State Department's negotiating team was led by the President's Special Representative to the Mediation in Nicaragua William Bowdler; he was renowned for having managed the government transition after the United States intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965.[46] As Carter's negotiator, he proposed a provisional government which would include members of Somoza's Liberal Party, exclude the *Sandinistas* and retain the National Guards. I pointed out earlier that the Managua Embassy had described the *Sandinistas* as "radicals" and thus all efforts, including Bowdler's, were geared to keeping them from power. In addition to members of Somoza's Liberal Party, "moderates" were identified as Conservative Party members, leaders of the major Nicaraguan business organization COSEP headed by Robelo, and the Roman Catholic Church.[47]

---

[44] **Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 155.**

[45] **Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 172-173.**

These characterizations of "radical" and "moderate" lead me to conclude that the United States foreign policymakers' political descriptors are not only deceiving, but useless. To be a "moderate" one need only be anti-leftist and especially anti-Marxist and/or pro-United States.[48] This questionable use of "moderate" is particularly evident in Robert Pastor's Condemned to Repetition, which is ambivalent if not opposed to the idea of self-determination; virtually every person he described as a "moderate" is right of centre and some are even arch-conservatives.[49] This disingenuousness of the process ultimately led to *Los Doce* withdrawing, arguing that the United States simply wanted "*Somocismo* without Somoza" since Bowdler's proposal "would leave practically intact the corrupt structure of the Somoza apparatus."[50]

---

[46] Dietrich, Somoza, 207.

[47] Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 270; Pearce, Under the Eagle, 125.

[48] Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 271; Alan Riding, New York Times (June 29, 1979), A1, A6; Alan Riding, New York Times (June 28, 1979), A3.

The Carter Administration's actions only could be interpreted as an attempt to prevent or subvert what appeared to be a probable *Sandinista* triumph. What is especially informing about the mediation process is that Carter wanted to maintain the National Guard. This seems somewhat nonsensical given the well-documented fact that the Guard were directly responsible for carrying out Somoza's repressive policies against the people of Nicaragua. Although some proponents of preserving the Guard have argued that it could be salvaged, this seems to belie the fact that the Somozas had almost 50 years to contaminate the institution. Most, if not all, of the Guards were trained during the Somoza years and thus were indoctrinated with his ideological commitments. This is not to say that some of them might have avoided engaging in brutality. If this were so, their talents were probably better used in an institution which was created in the popular (as in Nicaraguan citizenry) interests. Further, in light of the findings of the earlier noted Congressional Subcommittee on International Organization, the Amnesty International reports, and the documentary evidence compiled and depicted in mass media, the Guards were clearly corrupted under successive Somozas. To advocate the continued power of the Guard under a new regime was problematic and more important, antithetical to the genuine interests of Nicaraguans who were struggling for liberation from an oppressive regime and its institutions.

---

[49] See esp. Pastor's Condemned to Repetition, 167-207; Woodward's Veil; and a text which is ostensibly "neutral," Robert S. Leiken and Barry Rubin, eds., The Central American Crisis Reader.

[50] *Los Doce* statement quoted in Pearce, Under the Eagle, 125.

In the face of the United States' intransigence and even deception, within Nicaragua Somoza's hubris surged. It did not look like the United States was truly interested in undermining *Somocismo*, an institution it had created. Somoza vowed to crush the "Communist jerks" and to double the National Guard numbers. He unabashedly admitted to procuring arms on the open market from Israel and Argentina; these procurements suggested he was not about to leave.[51] According to Hunter, Israel shipped Somoza over 1,000 Uzi submachine guns, Galil rifles and later, nine combat-armed Cessnas (of which the FSLN shot down seven), two Sikorsky helicopters and surface-to-air missiles.[52] Hunter also pointed out that the Guards used those newly acquired weapons in "clean-up" operations conducted in some six cities and the "majority of victims--many of them were shot by the Guard at their own front doors--were between 14 and 21 years of age and were marked for execution simply because they lived in neighbourhoods" where the *Frente Sandinista* had been active and had wide support.[53] Despite the massive quantities of weapons he was receiving, Somoza and his collaborators took no chances; covertly Somoza and many *Somocistas* had started to liquidate assets and transfer money abroad.[54]

---

[51] Walker, Nicaragua, 37-38; Dietrich, Somoza, 216.

[52] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 138-139; London Observer Service, "Israel-Made Weapons Helped Save the Somoza Dynasty," Miami Herald (October 18, 1978).

Between October 1978 and January 1979 the Bowdler team continued its attempts to transfer power to politicans favourable to the Carter Administration, fearing the potential for "another Cuba."[55] As had become predictable, the East-West obsession overrode any larger concerns about Somoza tyranny and brutality. Further, by now Somoza was fully aware that the Carter Administration's overriding concern was "another Cuba" and that he was more preferable to the United States than the *Sandinistas*. Eventually mediation talks collapsed when Somoza rejected a proposal to have an internationally supervised referendum which would allow Nicaraguans to voice their opinions of the dictator. Within the United States Congress, 78 conservative politicans petitioned Carter to continue supporting

---

[53] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 138.

[54] Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 14-15.

[55] William LeoGrande, "The Revolution in Nicaragua: Another Cuba?" Foreign Affairs 58, 1 (Fall, 1979), 28-50; and Richard R. Fagen, "Dateline Nicaragua: The End of an Affair," Foreign Policy 36 (Fall, 1979), 178-191.

Somoza.[56] The fear of "another Cuba" became a fundamental preoccupation and this was echoed in a Washington Post editorial:

> What the United States is really dealing with in Nicaragua, or so we increasingly suspect, is a revolution. It is comforting to think that the aging dictator Somoza [50s] will somehow fade away and be replaced in the scheduled 1981 elections by moderate democrats friendly to the United States...[however] a 'second Cuba'...is not out of the question.[57]

By the following year, the Carter Administration continued its tentative support of the dictator despite its attempted management of an alternative to Somoza and to the *Sandinistas*. In January 1979 Carter had persuaded the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to postpone transferring 20 million dollars in stand-by-credits to the dictator. He also had reduced the Managua Embassy personnel to half, ostensibly signifying (diplomatic) opposition.[58] Within Latin America, support for the *Sandinistas* was more widespread and more clear. Various forms of support had been granted by Mexico, Venezuela, Panama and Costa Rica as well as several Social Democratic parties in Western Europe.[59] This was offset by Guatemala and El Salvador's support for Somoza. As well, I noted earlier that Israel and Argentina were already supplying the dictator with arms and military training for the National Guards.[60] Despite the preemptory counterrevolutionary moves by the Carter Administration and its allies in Israel, Guatemala, El Salvador and the IMF, the tide of internal and international support had turned in the *Sandinistas'* favour. In March 1979 the three "tendencies" of the *Frente Sandinistas* which had split in 1975 united and issued a joint declaration of political objectives.[61] The three initially had divided over tactics. The first tendency, the Prolonged Popular War (GPP), followed a rural *foco* strategy and included Tomas Borge, Henry Ruíz and Bayardo Arce. The second tendency, the Proletarian Tendency (TP), focussed primarily on organizing urban workers and it was led by Jaime Wheelock, Luís Carrión Cruz and Carlos Núñez. The third, the previously mentioned *Terceristas* or Third Force, supported urban and rural insurrections and included Daniel and Humbert Ortega Saavedra and Victor Tirado; the nine eventually became the National Directorate of the Revolution.[62]

---

[56] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 125.

[57] Washington Post (August 3, 1978), A22; and Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 266-267.

[58] LeoGrande, "The Revolution in Nicaragua," 35.

[59] Walker, Nicaragua, 38-39.

In April 1979, the unified *Sandinistas* attempted a final military offensive but it failed after the National Guards used air and ground forces to bomb the areas of insurrections. According to one New York Times report, "[T]he Government...[was] dropping 500-pound bombs from helicopters on rebel-held shantytowns, reportedly killing as many as 600 people in one day. Soldiers routinely kill suspected rebels they capture."[63] Further, in April 1979, Israel sent a defense team and arms supplies to assist the National Guards against the *Sandinista* guerrillas. While in Nicaragua, the Israeli team built an air defense system.[64] That month, the Human Rights Commission reported that some 500 youths "disappeared." In some cities in Nicaragua, the National Guard were engaged in the systematic raping of women and girls, and in certain areas, practically every woman had been the victim/survivor of rape.[65] Other women had their children murdered in front of their eyes to prevent them from participating or to force them into revealing information about *companeros* in the *Frente Sandinista*.[66] In the city of Estelí, after an Easter uprising, the National Guards killed over 1,000 people in a span of a week.[67] According to one news report in La Prensa (3 May, 1979):

---

[60] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 141-143, 110, 133-135.

[61] Walker, Nicaragua, 39.

[62] Walker, Nicaragua, 41; Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 315, 171.

---

[63] Alan Riding, "Reporters Notebook: Somoza Fighting On as Aides Panic," New York Times (June 28, 1979).

[64] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 125.

[65] Margaret Jayko, "Introduction" to Tomas Borge, Women and the Nicaraguan Revolution (New York: Pathfinder, 1982), 4-5.

[66] David Masson, "Women's Participation in Central American Revolution," 81.

[67] La Prensa (3 May, 1979); Dietrich, Somoza.

> It was the same as September [1978], dragging people out of their beds at 4 a.m. and shooting them after the Frente had moved out. We were the only city that went through three separate uprisings and three waves of National Guard barbarity. April meant that there was no one at all left in Estelí who didn't support the Frente.[68]

After the Easter uprising, news reports indicated that "the city [was] heavy with the smell of burning flesh, and buzzards circling overhead. The bodies of two youths aged about fifteen lay in a street filled with rubble, their throats slit, their hands tied behind their backs."[69] From Condega similar reports arose. Supporters of the *Frente Sandinista* were shot, women were raped and murdered along with their children, others were tortured. Many Condega residents fled to San Marcos, a Honduran town which bordered Nicaragua.[70]

As if the lives of ordinary Nicaraguans did not matter, the Somoza regime remained legitimate, at least with international financial institutions and the United States. In April and May the IMF with United States support approved two loans to Somoza: for 40 million and 25 million dollars.[71] At that time it also was widely believed that the United States military forces in Panama were covertly flying arms to Nicaragua for the National Guards.[72] Moreover, in April when various members of *Los Doce* paid a visit to Washington, D.C., the State Department did not see fit to set up an official meeting; the group met with Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass). In effect, at least two major observations can be made from these developments only two months before the triumph. First, the international support for the *Sandinistas* did not originate in the Carter Administration and in fact Carter was opposed to the guerrillas because of their Marxist and nationalist ideology. Second, Carter was wildly inconsistent in his human rights policy toward Somoza and it became, as Chomsky described, "primarily rhetorical."[73]

---

[68] La Prensa cited in Alison Rooper, Fragile Victory: Nicaraguan Community At War (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987), 187.

[69] Rooper, Fragile Victory, 187.

[70] Rooper, Fragile Victory, 188-189.

[71] Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 270; New York Times (June 27, 1979), A3; Washington Post (July 7, 1979), A1.

On May 29, the *Sandinistas* began a final popular and military offensive against the dictatorship and this time, insurrections were more widespread. The number of women alone characterized this guerrilla movement as distinct in the world; 30 per cent of the active combatants were women. *Commandante* Dora Maria Tellez was commanding the Western Front; four of the commanders in the major city of Leon were women and *Commandantes* Leticia Herrera, Doris Tijerino, Daisy Zamora and Monica Baltodano were leading battalions.[74] In fact, there were greater numbers of women over the age of 35 years than there were men of the same age. However, they paid dearly for their involvements, including as noted, being subjected to rape if captured.

---

[72] Pearce, Under the Eagle, 126.

[73] Chomsky, "On human rights and ideology," 277-282.

[74] Margaret Randall, Sandino's Daughters, 40-79.

During the month of May, the National Guards engaged in a massacre of people in the cities around Estelí and Condega. There were air strikes and bombing raids which dropped hundreds of pounds of bombs on civilian areas.[75] At that time, the Human Rights Commission called upon "all democratic nationals of the world and especially on the Organization of American States to take immediate measures to prevent the continuing genocide."[76] In addition to aerial bombing, the Commission found that ground soldiers were engaged in the systematic rape of women and widespread murder of children and the elderly, especially if they were related to any of the *Frente Sandinista* guerrillas. This barbarity only increased the opposition to Somoza, insurrections and solidarity with the guerrillas. Among women alone, the numbers were telling. The Nicaraguan women's association, *Asociacion de Mujeres Ante La Problematica Nacional* (AMPRONAC) which had formed in October 1977 with some 80 primarily educated, middle class women had expanded to thousands; within two years their membership had increased to 7,000 to 8,000.[77] According to *Commandante* Tellez, "[P]easant women got involved very early. They fought heroically in spite of the severe repression. It was harder for women in the cities. Political women were looked down on. They were called prostitutes."[78] After the triumph, the women of AMPRONAC renamed the organization to *Asociacion de Mujeres Nicaraguenses-Amanda Luisa Espinoza*, after the first woman to die in battle in 1970. In addition to national reconstruction, one of their first self-defined tasks was confronting *machismo*, that is, the patriarchal structure of Nicaraguan society.

---

[75] Rooper, Fragile Victory, 187.

[76] Commission cited in Rooper, Fragile Victory, 187.

[77] Magda Enrique, "We Women Learned What We Were Capable of Doing" in Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution, ed., Bruce

The depth and popularity of the *Sandinista* support took the Carter Administration by surprise since it was operating on the self-fulfilling assumption that because the *Sandinistas* were "radical," they could be marginalized politically in Nicaragua. With the show of popular support for the *Sandinistas*, what Bermann aptly characterized as "Byzantine" efforts were set in motion to prevent the "radical" *Sandinistas* from taking power. First, Carter's foreign policy officials considered a direct intervention under the umbrella of the Organization of American States (OAS). The plan was reportedly drawn up by Brzezinski in consultation with Defense Secretary Harold Brown, CIA Director Stansfield Turner and Secretary of State Vance.[79] According to the three-component plan,

---

Marcus (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1985), 257; Bonnie Mann, "The Radical Feminist Task of History: Gathering Intelligence in Nicaragua," Trivia, A Journal of Ideas 9 (Fall, 1986), 46.

[78] Tellez in Randall, Sandino's Daughters, v; also "Becoming Visible: Women in Nicaragua," Envio 6, 78 (December, 1987), 24.

[79] Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 270; New York Times (June 22,

the OAS would issue a joint demand for Somoza to leave; it would send an interim "peacekeeping" force to stop the fighting and hence, to prevent a National Guard defeat and a victory by *Sandinista* guerrillas. The third component of the plan was disinformation: to identify Cuban involvement and the need to prevent "another Cuba" as the justification. A meeting of the OAS was scheduled for June 21 in Washington, D.C. but in the interim, several significant events occurred.

In mid-June, a government in exile, the Junta for National Reconstruction, was unveiled in Costa Rica and with it, anti-*Sandinista* sentiments became even more pronounced in the Carter Administration and among foreign policymakers.[80] On June 18, 1979, one month before the triumph, one hundred members of the House of Representatives and five Senators took out a full page ad in the New York Times in the form of an open letter headlined, "Congress Asks: Please, Mr. President, Not Another Cuba!"[81] The letter encouraged the continued support of Somoza because of his loyalty to the United States. To what extent events like this, as well as the Republicans' extreme anticommunism, spurred Carter to accelerate opposition to the *Sandinistas*, it is not known. What is most interesting at this

---

1979), A1, A8.

[80] Walker, Nicaragua, 41.

[81] The New York Time (June 18, 1979).

juncture in the Nicaraguan struggle is that despite the Carter Administration's rhetoric which ostensibly supported human rights, this did not translate into a radical shift in United States foreign policy toward the Somoza regime.

There were several inescapable events which spurred Carter's opposition to Somoza, including the increasingly publicized brutality of the Guards. One example of the sheer arrogance of the Guards was captured on television and played and replayed before United States audiences. On June 20, 1979, ABC news correspondent Bill Stewart was pulled over by a contingent of National Guards, and, to the complete horror of those watching, summarily executed.[82] This particular act was not "just another rumour" of gratuitous violence or a news report about National Guard brutality. Stewart's death was captured in living colour by film crews' cameras, and the response from the American body politic was outrage, followed by a flood of letters, cables, telephone calls and news reports, expressing the same. This strengthened Carter's opposition to Somoza, although not his support for the *Sandinistas*.

At the OAS meeting in Washington, D.C. on June 21, Secretary of State Vance advanced the Brzezinski plan, requesting a peacekeeping force to counter the *Sandinistas* due to "mounting evidence of involvement by Cuba and others."[83] This, however, was counter to the direction of many Latin American states. He suggested the need to ensure "moderates" came to power in Nicaragua, implying that the unveiled government in exile was not comprised of "moderates." However, Panama had already officially recognized the *Sandinista*-led Junta for National Reconstruction. Further, Mexico flatly rejected intervention and Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda argued that "[I]t is not up to the OAS or anyone else to tell them how they should constitute their government once they knock down a dictator."[84] The United States did not obtain the support of even one Latin American country at the OAS meeting.[85] Later testifying at hearings of the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Viron Vaky continued to voice the "Cuba is cause for concern" line.[86] Yet the Administration never produced any evidence of widespread Cuban support. In fact, Panama, Costa Rica, and Mexico were openly supportive of the *Sandinistas*, so why the focus on Cuban aid specifically?

---

[82] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 143-144.

[83] Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 270.

In any event, on July 17, Somoza was given safe passage to Miami, Florida in a United States military plane flown in from Panama. As well, the CIA used AirAmerica planes disguised with the insignia of the International Red Cross to transport National Guardsmen into exile in Miami.[87] On July 18, the interim Junta for National Reconstruction was sworn in during ceremonies held in Leon. On July 19, Nicaraguans celebrated the triumph as *Sandinista* guerrillas entered the capital city of Managua.[88]

---

[84] Castaneda quoted in Bermann, Under the Big Stick, 270.

[85] New York Times (June 23, 1979), A1, A3; New York Times (June 22, 1979), A1, A8.

[86] House, United States Policy Toward Nicaragua, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, 96th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1979), 33-34.

The costs in human lives and suffering only could be imagined; the numbers told only part of the story. By war's end, there were some 50,000 dead (2 per cent of the population), 100,000 wounded, 40,000 orphaned children, 2,000 families without shelter, and untold numbers of victims/survivors of rape, torture and other cruel and inhumane treatment.[89] There were some 750,000 people who risked starvation because of no guaranteed access to food and/or income. The more general social legacy of the dictatorship also was devastating. First, in the area of education, 50 per cent of Nicaraguans were illiterate. In rural areas, the percentage ranged from 70 to 95 per cent illiteracy. For women, only about ten per cent were literate. Second, over 60 per cent of the population lived in "extreme poverty" according to United Nations criteria for categorizing standard of living. Between 80 to 90 per cent of urban dwellers were living in "barely subsistence" conditions.[90] Third, the conditions for children were brutal: between 50 and 83 per cent suffered from malnutrition and of these, over half were in the second and third stage; and infant mortality rate was estimated at 130 per thousand.[91] Despite staggering loans received by the dictator, the average Nicaraguan existed in the worst poverty in all Central America.

---

[87] Peter Kornbluh, "The Covert War" in Thomas W. Walker, ed., Reagan Versus the Sandinistas: The Undeclared War on Nicaragua (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987), 21.

[88] Walker, Nicaragua, 40.

[89] Booth and Walker, Understanding Central America, 61; Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 14-15; Tijerino, Inside the Nicaraguan Revolution, esp. chaps. 1-3.

The physical and environmental legacy of the Somoza dictatorship and the Revolution to depose him were staggering. Out of revenge against his middle class and bourgeois opposition, "Somoza [had] systematically bombed its factories. In the industrial zone of Managua, all along the north motorway, their burnt-out shells point accusing fingers to the heavens."[92] As a consequence of systematic bombings, the industrial infrastructure of the major cities was severely damaged and the estimated costs varied from 500 million to one billion dollars. Estimates of total property damage were in the area of 1.5 billion dollars.[93] Further, when Somoza departed Nicaragua, he left three and one-half million in the National

---

[90] Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 15.

[91] David C. Halperin and Richard Garfield, "Developments in Health Care in Nicaragua," New England Journal of Medicine 307 (1982), 388-392; Al Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom (Rolling Bay, WA.: Sea Otter Press, 1988), 22.

[92] Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 14; and Weber, Nicaragua.

[93] John A. Booth and Thomas W. Walker, Understanding Central America (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 61.

Treasury and a 1.6 billion dollars in debt. The amount in the treasury was indicative of the corruption. According to Al Burke, at least 33 million dollars of the IMF loans had been transferred to Somoza's personal bank accounts abroad.[94] Moreover, gradually 2.5 million cattle had been covertly slaughtered and shipped to cold storage in Miami. In total, there was an estimated 25 per cent reduction in the cattle herd. Additionally, Somoza had borrowed heavily from foreign private banks and had incurred huge debts to multinational corporations. Upon coming to power, these foreign creditors held the *Sandinistas* liable and the *Sandinistas*, in turn, agreed to assume all debts except those incurred to Israel and Argentina.[95] Conservative reports estimate that some 700 million dollars was transferred out of the country by other *Somocistas*.

III.4. Seeds of the *Contra*/revolution

At this time, "intelligence" reports also started circulating that Cuba was significantly involved and this was to form the pretext for the previously mentioned second National Security finding authorizing covert activities against the *Sandinistas* six months after they came to power.[96] I will examine this "evidence" later in this chapter. Only temporarily did the Carter Administration accept the *Sandinistas*. In 1980, Carter signed a document called a National Intelligence Finding authorizing covert activities directed against the *Sandinista* government. A finding is a legal stipulation required by United States law prior to the conduct of any covert actions.[97] The presidential signing of this document became an essential requirement after Watergate. Carter's finding authorized the CIA to intervene directly in the internal political affairs of Nicaragua. It authorized the CIA to provide financial and political support to opponents of the *Sandinistas* (that is, "moderates"); to supply newsprint and funds for the newspaper, La Prensa; and to rebuild non-leftist CIA ties which had been destroyed after the fall of Somoza and the seizure of files detailing CIA "collaborators."[98] The assumption undergirding these activities was that given the Marxist rhetoric of the *Sandinistas*, they must be communists in the vein of Cuba and the Soviet Union.

---

[94] Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 14; Booth and Walker, Understanding Central America, 61.

[95] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 137-141.

[96] Intelligence reports discussed in New York Times (July 4,

---

1979), A3; Alan Riding, New York Times (June 27, 1979), A3.

[97] Section "662 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 22 U.S.C. @ 2422, the CIA may not use appropriated funds to conduct operations (other than to obtain "necessary intelligence") in foreign countries 'unless and until the President finds that each such operation is important to the national security of the United States'." Section 501(b) as amended, 50 U.S.C. @ 413 that the House and Senate intelligence committees should be informed either prior to covert actions or in a "timely fashion" sometime thereafter. See, The Tower Commission Report, John Tower, Edmund Muskie and Brent Scowcroft (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), 175.

[98] Woodward, Veil, 113.

Since these particular events, it has been claimed by a number of commentators that the Carter Administration was supportive of the *Sandinistas*. There is but a grain of truth in this claim. Despite Reagan's campaign rhetoric about Carter's support for the *Sandinistas*, there are enough contradictory factors to suggest that support was short-term expediency and did not reflect a genuine commitment to Nicaraguan self-determination, independent of United States control. Reagan's pre-election rhetoric forced Carter to take a more militarist approach toward the *Sandinistas*, but Carter's hand certainly was not an unwilling one, so to speak. After Carter failed in his efforts to engineer the replacement of Somoza with Nicaraguans more conservative than the *Sandinistas*, such as Arturo Cruz or Alfonso Robelo, then Carter commenced more serious discussions with the *Sandinistas*. The element of paternalism always remained; Carter did not take these armed guerrillas seriously.

Robert Pastor pointed out that the *Sandinistas* felt that they had been "fighting the United States for as long as they had been fighting Somoza. They knew, and expected, the Carter Administration to try to prevent them from coming to power" and in some sense, were surprised to have succeeded.[99] This is especially true given Carter's mediation team's proposals. Nicaraguan affairs were again being managed from the White House and, to say the least, the *Sandinistas* were not interested in being complicitous with denying Nicaragua's autonomy and also their own. As fiercely nationalist Nicaraguan leaders, they were not going to cower to foreign rule no matter how (materially) powerful.

---

[99] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 202.

Carter's surface support for the *Sandinistas* was interpreted as progressive and applauded by *Sandinista* supporters. It was condemned by the conservatives as yet another indication of Carter being "soft on communism." According to the former CIA intelligence analyst David MacMichael, "[T]he Reagan people were convinced that we got into this through the wimpishness of the Carter Administration" and they were determined that a policy of strength would rescue the United States from this quagmire.[100] This was a common theme of conservatives in Reagan's camp as they geared up for the election which was then to be held in November 1980. The *Sandinistas* did triumph and Carter's manuevering continued. After the triumph, the Republican Party Platform accused Carter of being too lenient, and Reagan promised "to support the efforts of the Nicaraguan people to establish a free and independent government."[101] This was, in part, a response to the fact that immediately after the Government for Reconstruction was constituted in Nicaragua, the United States provided some ten to fifteen million dollars in emergency aid, and another eight and one-half million dollars in emergency economic relief in September 1979.[102]

---

[100] MacMichael, an interview with Robert Matthews, May 13, 1986; quoted in Matthews, "The CIA's War" 19.

[101] Matthews, "The CIA's War," 20.

In 1980, Carter received congressional approval to provide 75 million dollars in aid to Nicaragua, 60 per cent of which was targeted for the private sector with the remainder for the Government for Reconstruction. Although this aid was approved in August 1979, one month after the triumph, it was not released until September 1980 with some sixteen conditions attached. In addition to a United States Senate stipulation that 60 per cent be earmarked for the private sector, the House required that one per cent of the aid had to be spent on publicizing United States generosity; that the remainder could be used exclusively to purchase goods made in the United States; and that none of the aid could be spent on collaborative Cuban health and education projects.[103] Two central reasons stipulated for terminating aid were the failure to schedule elections and evidence of "exporting revolution" in Central America.

Counterrevolutionary activities began almost immediately after the *Sandinistas* came to power. In the fall of 1979, Colonel Enrique Bermudez Varela, who had been Somoza's Defense Attache in Washington, D.C., was contacted by the United States Air Force Western Hemisphere Chief, then Major-General Charles E. "Chuck" Boyd.[104] Boyd was opposed to the *Sandinistas'* rise to power and wanted to canvass Bermúdez on his position vis-a-vis the *Sandinistas*. After mutually satisfying discussions, Boyd put Bermúdez in contact with the CIA and shortly thereafter Bermúdez was quietly placed on the CIA's payroll. Of course, Bermúdez' public persona was promoted as one of a patriot concerned for his country. He told those who were inquisitive enough to ask that he was personally funding his anti-*Sandinista* activities, using the income from the sale of his house in Washington, D.C.[105] Thus at the behest of the CIA, Bermúdez commenced an extensive recruitment campaign and the fruits of his labour were primarily compatriots from the National Guard and other men who were loyal *Somocistas*, including Arístide Sanchez.[106] Similarly, the Argentinians were contacted by General Vernon Walters, the roving Ambassador to Latin America and later Ambassador to the United Nations after Jeane Kirkpatrick.[107] In effect, immediately upon coming to power a network was being established to subvert them. The exact details of how the counterrevolution was built will be discussed in Chapter IV and V; however, it is important to point out here that contrary to the majority of reports which claim the *Contras* were created in 1981, it is my claim that they were created in 1979. This claim is important to keep in mind as this analysis shifts from the Carter Administration to that of the Reagan Administration.

---

[102] Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 20.

[103] Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 20.

[104] Dillon, Commandos, 62; Dickey, With the Contras, 53.

---

[105] **Bermudez did sell his house in Washington, D.C. and relocated his wife and children to a Miami surburban ranch. However, his travel money to recruit anti-***Sandinistas* came from the CIA. Dillon, Commandos, 63, 341n5.

[106] **Congressional Report-Senate (1986), S3029.**

[107] **Los Angeles Times (3 March, 1985).**

After the triumph in July 1979, Israel continued its aid to the National Guards who went into exile in Costa Rica, Honduras and especially El Salvador and Guatemala. Now, however, Israel's support was geared to supporting the forces bent on subverting the new government. Jane Hunter pointed out that accounts of Israel's aid to the *Contras* go back to 1979.[108] The aid to the *Contras* was funnelled through a network of agents and arms dealers who had been established after the Carter Administration began wavering back and forth in its position of aid to Somoza.[109] Two CIA agents involved included Edwin Wilson, who was later convicted for selling arms to Libya, and Thomas Clines; the "security assistance program" they established for Somoza was transferred to the *Contras*.[110] By January 1981 when Reagan came to power, the CIA was already prepared to launch a full-scale counterrevolutionary assault upon the *Sandinistas*. Hunter stated that one of the first moves of the Reagan Administration "was to arrange with Argentina for trainers for the contras. Veterans of the Argentine 'dirty war' were enthusiastic about exporting their skills and their politics."[111] These immediate counterrevolutionary activities of the Reagan Administration was no surprise given the anti-*Sandinista*, anti-communist tenor of the Reagan Administration camp as they geared-up for the upcoming federal elections.

---

[108] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 145; AP, "Israel-Contras Link Goes Back Years, According to Israeli," San Francisco Chronicle (December 5, 1986).

[109] Jerry Meldon, "The Contra Connection May Go Back as Far as 1979," Boston Globe (November 30, 1986).

[110] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 145; Ben Bradlee, Jr., "Ex-agent says U.S. shielded 4 tied to Contras," Boston Globe (January 25, 1987).

III.5. Reagan's Early anti-*Sandinista* Position

Prior to coming to power the Reagan camp already had begun a campaign of gray propaganda. In as early as March of 1979, two months before the *Sandinista* triumph, presidential candidate Ronald Reagan was already trivializing the historic significance of events within Nicaragua, for the Nicaraguan people. According to Reagan, "[T]he troubles in Nicaragua bear a Cuban label...there is no question that most of the rebels are Cuban-trained, Cuban-armed and dedicated to creating another Communist country in this hemisphere."[112] While claiming that there might be some people within Nicaragua "who probably have justified grievances," he dismissed the bulk of internal strife as foreign-inspired and not representative of the will of the majority of Nicaraguan citizenry.

---

[111] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 145; Christopher Dickey, With the Contras (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985), 112-119, 123-124, 145-146.

[112] Reagan during a March 1979 radio address to the nation; The Nation (April 19, 1986), 542.

This version of events within Nicaragua was to be altered somewhat after the Revolution; the Republicans would claim the majority of Nicaraguans wanted the Revolution, fought for Somoza's overthrow but were betrayed by the *Sandinistas*. Prior to Somoza's defeat, however, the Republicans were not interested in supporting the "Nicaraguan people."

The improvisation in rhetoric was evident in the Republican Party Platform for the November 1980 elections. It was a clear indication of the Reagan campaign's refusal to accept the *Sandinistas'* triumph. The Platform suggested a differentiation was to be made between the government and the people of Nicaragua; the Republicans indicated their support for the 'people of Nicaragua' as somehow distinct from their government. They were now claiming to have always supported the democratic aspirations of the Nicaraguan people:

> We deplore the Marxist Sandinista takeover of Nicaragua and the Marxist attempts to destablize El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. We do not support United States assistance to any Marxist government in this hemisphere and we oppose the Carter administration aid program for the government of Nicaragua. However, we will support the efforts of the Nicaraguan people to establish a free and independent government.[113]

In effect, even before coming to power, the Reagan Administration began to escalate the level of ideological hostilities between the

---

[113] "The Republic Party Platform" (68-69) in Leiken and Rubin, The Central American Crisis Reader (New York: Summit Books, 1987), 515-516.

United States and Nicaragua. It also placed Carter between a rock and a hard place since any support he may have been inclined to offer the *Sandinistas* would be interpreted as "soft on communism." Not surprisingly, then, when the Republicans did come to power in 1980, the *Contras* were lauded as the "true" representatives of the Nicaraguan people. Further, the Republican Party Platform constructed the events in Nicaragua in East-West terms, studiously ignoring the multiple objective reasons the Nicaraguan government had *not* to be overly supportive of the United States: Carter's anti-*Sandinista* maneuvering, the Republican Party Platform and Reagan's anti-*Sandinista* rhetoric, and the experiences under the Somozas. The construction of the events within Nicaragua in these terms set the stage for what was to come. In the following section, I explore the "evidence" which was used by both the Carter and Reagan Administration to condemn the *Sandinistas*. It constitutes one of the threads which connected the Carter Administration's policies to that of the Reagan Administration's.

When Carter left office, he was on the verge of withdrawing the aid to the Government for Reconstruction due to CIA intelligence which claimed the *Sandinistas* were providing arms to the *Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional* (FMLN) guerrillas in El Salvador. In the next section I examine this "evidence" since it was used as the pretext for a Reagan finding in 1981. As a consequence of CIA claims, only two days before leaving office, a memo had been drawn up which, had Carter signed, would have terminated United

States aid to Nicaragua.[114] This would have removed the remaining 15 million of the 75 million dollars that had not been transferred. Evidently, this aid would have been terminated solely on the grounds of speculative evidence that the *Sandinistas* were collaborating with the FMLN, and acting as a conduit for arms supply. This "evidence" will be analyzed in the following section. What Carter's actions implicitly suggested to the *Sandinistas* was that they, as representatives of the Republic of Nicaragua, had no right to a foreign policy independent of United States political, military and/or economic interests.

III.6. Manufacturing Truth and Reality

No doubt it is a testament to the highly refined political education-cum-indoctrination practiced in "open democratic societies" such as the United States that it is hard for citizens to perceive or even imagine themselves as intellectually repressed. Yet, democratic theorists often have conceived of citizens' minds as "empty slates" upon which anything or nothing could be inscribed. In the 1920s Walter Lippman wrote that "the manufacture of consent" eventually could lead to a radical revisioning of "the practice of democracy."[115] This idea of manufacturing consent, with the

---

[114] Woodward, Veil, 115-117.

[115] Lippman; cited in The Chomsky Reader, 136.

implication that those who eventually consented would believe that they had "freely chosen" is best exemplified in the ideology of the advertising and public relations industries. Edward Bernays described the phenomenon as "the engineering of consent" and Gabriel Kolko similarly noted that the public mind was "the object of a cultural and ideological industry" which ranged from schools to mass culture.[116] The public mind was the stage upon which various acts were performed. The body politic could be "penetrated."

Within democracies, the human mind also has become a battleground upon which competing ideologues seek to imprint their respective dogmas. However, the very idea of "open society" or a "marketplace of ideas" predisposes citizens of such societies to what Chomsky calls "brainwashing under freedom."[117] The misconception in "open societies" is that it is totalitarian (usually communist) regimes which suppress dissent and stifle critical thinking constructed upon a wide range of ideas. This contemporary claim by Chomsky (re)calls to mind a claim made by Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835. Then de Tocqueville observed that there was "universal conformity" within the United States and he knew "of no other country in which there is so little true independence of mind and freedom of discussion as America."[118] The observations and analyses by both theorists during different historic moments does suggest less than a critical political engagement of citizens within the body politic, at least with regard to foreign policy. The phenomenon of manufactured consent, as Chomsky elaborates it, calls into question the idea of free choice and it is certainly antithetical to critical thinking about political matters. A long-term danger is that unless the lies masquerading as truth which undergird manufactured or engineered consent are deconstructed, such lies eventually may pass into the annals of history as "the truth." This is not to suggest that unmasking of lies, ipso facto reveals Truth. Rather, it is to suggest that unless a lie is known, citizens will find themselves operating within the context of "false consciousness." Further, if lies are not challenged, genuine political understanding becomes less probable. Thus although the lie may be uncovered later, this cannot undo the fact that damages may have resulted from an uninformed consent. In the following paragraphs, the manufacturing of truth and the subsequent use of the latter as a "justification" for CIA covert activities in Nicaragua and El Salvador under the Carter and Reagan Administrations, will be critically assessed.

---

[116] Bernay, and Kolko; cited in The Chomsky Reader, 136.

[117] The Chomsky Reader, 136.

[118] de Tocqueville; cited in Chomsky, On Power and Ideology, 126.

It should be recalled that Carter's National Security finding was signed within six months of the *Sandinistas* coming to power. At this time, there was such chaos during the transition to power within Nicaragua that support for the FMLN seemed more of a red herring than a reason for authorizing a multi-million dollar covert operation. When the events are deconstructed and reconstructed according to their actual occurrence, there is no clear evidence that the *Sandinista* support for the FMLN occurred after coming to power, as much as before coming to power when both were guerrilla movements. To a student of revolution, such collaboration should not be surprising, and if the logic is extended, solidarity after coming to power should be of no surprise. There was clearly affinities in ideology and political rhetoric, but at the time of the Carter finding in 1980, there was only speculation, without any pictures or other documentation that arms were being shipped by the *Sandinistas* to the FMLN.[119] Nevertheless, upon coming to office, Reagan's Campaign Manager and later CIA Director, William Casey interpreted the intelligence evidence from the previous Administration to be "compelling and conclusive."[120]

This particular evidence partly accounts for the memo that had been drafted for Carter's signature before leaving office. If Carter had signed that memo, it would have terminated United States aid to the *Sandinistas*.[121] The CIA had the diaries and personal papers of Shafik Handal, the secretary general of El Salvador's small communist party. The CIA claimed that the diaries and papers included accounts of trips to the Soviet Union, Eastern bloc countries and Cuba for the purpose of procurring arms for the FMLN guerrillas. Further, it was claimed by the CIA that agreements were reached by the parties on ammunition and medical supplies, including their shipment via Cuba and Nicaragua. Moreover, the CIA claimed that M-16 machine guns, lost by United States soldiers to the North Vietnamese, had been captured from the FMLN. This information was disseminated to paint a picture of a global communist conspiracy.[122] This report was the foundation for the controversial "White Paper" dated the same day, February 23, 1981. The White Paper subsequently led to rebuttals by former CIA agents Philip Agee and Ralph McGehee, who denounced it as fabrication and/or exaggeration.[123]

---

[119] Woodward, Veil, 115.

[120] Woodward, Veil, 112.

[121] Woodward, Veil, 115-117.

These documents on communist interference in El Salvador require critiquing because they have been so variously interpreted and, apparently, manipulated. They also undergirded the initial Reagan Administration's support for the *Contras*. There were a number of these documents, titled simply G, F, I, J, K; G is the one most often cited. On March 4, 1982, the House Intelligence Committee characterized the evidence proffered by the CIA, detailing communist support for the Salvadoran guerrillas, the FMLN, as

---

[122] "Document G: Communist Interference in El Salvador: Documents Demonstrating Communist Support of the Salvadoran Insurgency" (U.S. State Department, Special Report No. 80, February 23, 1981); in Leiken and Rubin, eds., The Central American Crisis Reader, 518-522; Woodward, Veil, 112-113.

[123] McGehee, "The C.I.A. and The White Paper on El Salvador," The Nation (April 11, 1981); see also McGehee, Deadly Deceits: My 25 Years in the CIA (New York: Sheridan Square Publications, 1983). Pursuant to CIA policy, the critique was previewed by the CIA and various sections censored (e.g. 423-425).

"convincing."[124] Similarly, the House Intelligence Subcommittee on Oversight and Evaluation characterized the evidence of communist support to the Salvadoran guerrillas as "beyond doubt," although it did dispute the degree of support and the amounts.[125] These assessments became the foundation of the Reagan Administration's decision to fund covert activities to counteract any *Sandinista* role in the procurring of arms for the FMLN guerrillas. The attacks on the intelligence evidence, the CIA's interpretation of the evidence, and the decision to fund covert activities ostensibly to interdict arms to the FMLN, came from a seemingly unlikely combination of sources.

Initial rebuttals to the White Paper came from the former CIA agents Agee and McGehee. In an article entitled "The C.I.A. and The White Paper on El Salvador," McGehee challenged the veracity and interpretation of the CIA's evidence which was submitted to the House Intelligence Committee.[126] The former agent called the document a combination of fabrication, exaggeration and overstatements: Reagan Administration propaganda. One particularly glaring error in

---

[124] Dickey, With the Contras, 282, note to 74.

[125] House Intelligence Subcommittee on Oversight and Evaluation, "U.S. Intelligence Performance on Central America: Achievements and Selected Instances of Concern;" see also "Amendment to the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1983: Report Together with Additional, Minority, and Additional Dissenting Views," Report 98-122, Part I (House of Representatives, May 13, 1983), 1-9.

[126] McGehee, The Nation (April 11, 1981); see also critical commentaries conducted in The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post, both of which identified overstatements and exaggerated claims.

"Document F" was a clear indication of the CIA authors' ignorance of the Salvadoran insurgents, ideologies, and affiliations. "Document F" erroneously claimed that the Popular Liberation Forces' (FPL) second-in-command "Ana María," *nom de guerre* of Dr. Melida Anaya Montes, was Ana Guadalupe Martínez of the Salvadoran Peoples Revolutionary Army (ERP). The FPL's first in command and principal founder in 1970, nine years before the *Sandinista* triumph, was Salvador Cayetano Carpio; Dr. Montes or "Ana Maria" was second in command. The CIA might have been better off listening to the FPL on *Radio Farabundo Martí* which the FPL operated. Or, it might have read the press releases from the FPL's main spokesperson, Leonel Gonzalez; he became spokesperson after the murder-suicide of "Ana María" and Carpio in 1983. Similarly, the ERP operated *Radio Venceremos* and its main spokespersons were known to be Ana Guadalupe Martínez and Joaquín Villalobos.[127] Confusing the two women might seem innocuous but if there was evidence of an arms supply, it should indicate which group(s) or individuals were receiving the arms. Lack of knowledge should have raised a red flag to those who prefer clarity and veracity instead of speculation and even fabrication.

Ironically, at the time of the CIA's claims, the two guerrilla movements, as students of Central American revolutions were aware, were at odds. Had the authors of "Document F" had authentic evidence on either group, they would have known this information.[128] Since the two groups were not collaborating, the authors' ignorance led to a confusion not only about who the arms were going to, but also about who actually belonged to the various groups. Additionally, the FPL operated primarily in the areas of Chalatenango, San Vincente, Usulatan and Cabañas; the EPR's main influence came from Morazan.[129] The fact that the CIA could not distinguish the various "Salvadoran guerrillas" called into question the claims that the CIA had "convincing" knowledge of an arms-supply network between Nicaragua and the "Salvadoran insurgents" only generically identified.

---

[127] **See discussion of the various Salvadoran guerrilla groups and their respective political philosophies in Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 202-204.**

Additionally, "Document G" indicates tensions between the Nicaraguan *Sandinistas* (FSLN) and the Salvadoran FMLN. It suggested the *Sandinistas* were reluctant to support the FMLN in any kind of substantial military manner. The FMLN and other members of the Salvadoran opposition, on the other hand, were facing massive army and death squad counterinsurgency attacks; they needed immediate military support, and hence the tensions. In contrast to the *Sandinistas'* caution, in late 1981 Cuba's Fidel Castro publicly announced that he saw it as a moral duty to support the FMLN. According to "Document G," although moral support was guaranteed, material assistance did not extend beyond 1980.[130] The discrepancies evident from critically examining "Document F" and "Document G" also call into question the assessment of "convincing" evidence, or minimally, the need for covert military action to interdict arms. What is extraordinary about these developments is the fact that once the lies had been told, more and more duplicitousness was necessary in order to cover them up. Most of these lies started in the Carter Administration but they continued and were amplified in the Reagan Administration. Thus, by way of anticipating the next chapter, it might be useful to continue the analysis of these documents and a few of their significant consequences into the Reagan years.

---

[128] Dickey, With the Contras, 281, note to 74.

[129] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 203.

[130] Dickey, With the Contras, 281, note to 74.

On May 13, 1983, the House Intelligence Committee Report which accompanied the House of Representatives Bill (H.R. 2760), also had a detailed dissent by Representative C.W. "Bill" Young. The carefully considered dissent was a critique of the White Paper on El Salvador. Young claimed that the *Sandinistas'* assistance to the FMLN "in the early part of 1980, according to documents, was largely facilitative."[131] The facilitation included putting some of the FMLN guerrillas in contact with Panamanian arms traffickers who had been used by the *Sandinistas* during their armed opposition to Somoza. The nature of this facilitation was substantiated by *Sandinista* National Directorate Commandante Bayardo Arce in an independent interview with Christopher Dickey and the Washington Post

---

[131] Young, (38), cited in Dickey, With the Contras, 281-282.

Assistant Managing Editor Jim Hoagland in March 1982.[132]

The critiques by former CIA men Agee and McGehee's of the CIA's intelligence sources and interpretation were consistent with that of another CIA official who quit over Reagan Administration policies in Central America. In 1984, CIA intelligence analyst David MacMichael told the World Court he quit because the Reagan Administration's policies were "hyperbole and deception."[133] MacMichael testified that in 1981 the Reagan Administration began developing its plan, not to interdict arms to Salvadoran guerrillas as claimed, but to destabilize Nicaragua. The plan had a typical self-fulfilling logic, namely to manufacture events that would compel the *Sandinistas* into "hot pursuit across its international borders, a clampdown on civil liberties and, ultimately, the harrassment of U.S. Embassy personnel in Managua."[134] Additionally, consistent with Representative Young's dissent, MacMichael testified that the CIA's intelligence, through second and third hand sources, at best indicated sporadic shipment consisting "principally of medicine, clothing and ammunition." Given the Administration's focus on some kind of elaborate communist arms-supply connection, "I [MacMichael] became convinced that intelligence on the crucial question of the arms flow from Nicaragua to the Salvadoran rebels was being badly misused to support administration policy." MacMichael concluded by saying that in his "opinion, analysis was strained and even distorted in the effort to convince those in Congress, the public, and the press who might have doubted the foundation of the policy."[135] The evidence was distorted to manufacture consent, one ultimately based on illusions.[136]

---

[132] Dickey, With the Contras, 281-282.

[133] Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 137.

[134] Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 138.

There were others who quit the Administration over Reagan's policies in Central America, but more generally, over the questionable foundation of many of the foreign policies emerging from the White House. John Horton, a senior CIA agent, resigned as a direct consequence of the alteration of his reports to suit CIA Director Casey's interpretations of evidence and what they meant, or should mean, for United States foreign policy.[137] Similarly, Casey's Deputy Director, John M. McMayon, left the CIA in May 1986 disenchanted with the CIA's overall focus on organizing and fighting proxy wars in Central America and throughout the Third World.[138] Perhaps the most damning critiques of the Reagan Administration's policies came from his Administration's Budget Director of four years, David Stockman. After resigning, Stockman accused Reagan of

---

[135] See David MacMichael in New York Times (17 July 1984); cited in Al Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 138.

[136] The Chomsky Reader, 121-136.

[137] Matthews, "The CIA's War," 24.

[138] In These Times (March 26-April 1, 1986); cited in Matthews, "The CIA's War", p. 24.

"self-deception." He claimed that, "[A]fter four years, I had to conclude that what comes out of the White House type-writer is all hot air."[139]

The central claim here is that the CIA never produced any evidence that armed shipments had been made to the *Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional* (FMLN) directly from Nicaragua, and in fact, its own documents suggest that after 1980, provision of any kind of support had become negligible. For these reasons, the claims of arms shipments to the FMLN seem more of a manufactured diversionary tactic -- a red herring. The real context was established in Carter's finding of 1980 and the subsequent findings signed by Reagan. As one CIA official claimed, "[T]here were always two tracks, the one publicly stated CIA objective of interdicting weapons to Salvadoran guerrillas, and the other, the overthrow of the Sandinista government."[140] The United States wanted a government it considered suitable to its political-economic and military interests. The *Sandinistas* were not considered suitable so they had to go.

III.7. Conclusion

In light of the support for the Guards, it was not solely chance when after 1979, the CIA's and the Reagan Administration's opposition to the *Sandinistas* increasingly involved the National Guard, operating out of bases, including those of the United States military, in Honduras. Moreover, in the "Cold" War context (Cold for the United States, perhaps, but certainly "hot" for Nicaragua), the overt foreign policy actions that involved Congress or international organizations were not the best indicator of foreign policy actions. For those operating from within the Cold War framework, what is indicative of Carter and later Reagan's approach to revolution in Central America in general, and Nicaragua in particular, were the covert actions against Nicaragua. Overt foreign policy actions appear consistent relative to the rhetoric of diplomacy, whereas covert actions appear more consistent with supremacist ideological precommitments evident from the early days of empire. The latter is what informed the preservation of relations of domination and subordination.

---

[139] Los Angeles Times (August 23, 1986); in Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 43; also Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 170-171.

[140] The Washington Post (February 24, 1985), cited in Matthews, "The CIA's War," 23.

Constructing events in Nicaragua within a solely Cold War framework studiously ignored the home-grown nature of Nicaragua's Revolution. It also highlighted the ignorance or indifference among United States policymakers who did not know how to read the rhetoric of the *Sandinistas* and those of other nationalists. A recognition of Trevor Farrell's earlier-noted insights would have allowed Carter to think about or rethink his approach and the ideas which undergirded his actions. It would have required him to consider the role of the United States, of which he was a part, in the creation of the nationalist anti-United States sentiments which are pervasive in Latin America. There is a correlation, even if it is conveniently ignored. However, Carter interpreted the *Sandinistas'* rhetoric based on United States reality which since the 1950s inextricably has been linked with conceiving of the world in bipolar terms: East-West, "them" or "us," "foe" or "friend." Moreover, given the traditional "great" power thinking, it was inevitable that a non-reflexive Carter would lead to the United States dominating Nicaragua, a mere "minor" power, whether military or economic. Propaganda was the means of advancing the requisite intellectual justification.

The activities of the Carter Administration provided the seeds for the counterrevolutionary movement and were no less instrumental than the actions of the Reagan Administration. Carter's covert intelligence activities of 1978 and 1980 as well as overt actions were guided by the prevailing idea that the Nicaraguan government had to be suitable to United States interests. This "interest" translated into a posture of anti-communism. As such, Pastor's basic thesis that Carter was "condemned to repetition" is correct.[141] Carter's foreign policy towards revolution in Nicaragua followed the conservative orthodoxy of the past, meaning there were two possibilities: a big stick or a carrot to dissuade revolutionary rhetoric and policies. There was never a genuine policy of supporting self-determination nor one of non-interference. Although the politics of the "big stick" is studiously denied by conservatives and some liberal foreign policymakers, in practice it is clearly indicated by covert opposition and CIA-inspired *coups d'etats* and counterrevolutions against radical and/or nationalist governments. The "carrot" is more complex but is generally evident in financial and material "incentives" and efforts to coopt revolutionaries toward more right-wing ideologies. As to be expected, this is generally true of both the Democrats and Republicans in power.

---

[141] **Examples of this thesis include: Pastor's Condemned to Repetition: esp. Chap. 5: "To Mediate or Not: The Policy Question" (76-100); and Walter LaFeber's, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America (Toronto: George J. McLeod, 1983).**

In the chapter to follow, I continue my examination of doctrinaire interventions, this time focusing on the Reagan Administration and Reagan's foreign policymakers. I show that the ideology of key foreign policymakers such as Jeane Kirkpatrick, Elliott Abrams, Alexander Haig, George Shultz and Ronald Reagan, was continuous with that of the past: East-West dynamics were emphasized, the need to preserve order and especially an order in which the United States was dominant, rolling back communism at whatever costs, and destroying Marxist-inspired revolutionaries. One logical outcome of this ideological position was a continuation of the Carter Administration's subversion of the *Sandinistas* by supporting the *Contras* and other like-minded counterrevolutionaries worldwide.

O Lord our Father,

our young patriots, idols of our heart, go forth to battle -- be Thou near them!

With them, in spirit, we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe; help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriots dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it -- for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet!

We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts.

AMEN.

Mark Twain
The War Prayer.

Chapter IV

Ideology and *Contra*/dictions: Reagan, the *Sandinistas* and the *Contras*

> The price of containing Soviet adventurism in the Americas will never be as cheap, in dollars and in blood, as it is today. Better by far to aid the so-called "Contras" today than to send in the marines later.
>
> John Silber
> 16 April, 1985

> We vehemently deny that the problems of Central America are the result of East-West confrontation. Such a notion ignores the long history of poverty, injustice, of exploitation and plunder, that has led our peoples to rebel. Such poverty and injustices have been caused by ruthless exploitation by national oligarchies and plunder by the imperialists...
>
> Sergio Ramirez
> *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution*

IV.1. Introduction

This chapter is a continued examination of the workings of power and ideology in United States relations with Nicaragua focusing primarily, although not exclusively, on the period 1980 to 1986. This delimitation is chosen for at least four reasons. Each reason is situated in the fact that the "dirty" war became fully "exposed" as such in 1986. As such, the primary purpose of this chapter is to explicate the practical and material aspects of the ma(s)king of the Nicaraguan *Contra*/revolution, that is, "how" it was made. First, on June 25, 1986 the United States House of Representatives openly voted 221 to 209 to provide the *Contras* 100 million dollars in aid, meaning, in fact, that it surreptitiously declared war on

Nicaragua.[1] Second, the Senate refused to prohibit or limit the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) use of its contingency funds to support the *Contras*. Some reports at that time placed the CIA's budget for the *Contras* at 400 million dollars.[2] Third, on the 27th of June, the International Court of Justice (the World Court) at the Hague brought forth its judgment that the United States actions in Nicaragua were a violation of the principles of international law and, hence, were legally indefensible.[3] Nevertheless, two days later, the Senate voted to uphold the House's position in support of the 100 million dollar (plus 400 million) aid package. The Senate vote on August 13, 1986 was 53 to 47.[4] Fourth, in November of that same year a CIA Cessna-123K plane, which had originated out of Ilopango military base in El Salvador and was transporting arms supplies to the *Contras*, was shot down over southern Nicaragua.[5] Its sole survivor, Eugene Hasenfus, was from Marinette, Wisconsin. He was carrying an identification card signed by the Head of the Salvadoran Air Force, Juan Rafael Bustillo; this signified that American operatives were directly and officially involved in the *Contra*/revolution within Nicaragua.[6] Hasenfus was the first North American captured and, as one Nicaraguan radio announcer claimed, he typified the "Yanqui stereotype," meaning he was "tall, blond and strong, just like one always imagined a pure gringo would be."[7] It is my contention that the acts of the Reagan Administration, the Congress and the CIA, also were morally indefensible in light of just war criteria governing interventions, elaborated in Chapter I.[8]

---

[1] E. Bradford Burns, At War In Nicargua: The Reagan Doctrine and the Politics of Nostalgia (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 27.

[2] Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 27.

[3] See Marlene Dixon, ed., On Trial: Reagan's War Against Nicaragua (San Francisco: Synthesis Publications, 1985); Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 61.

[4] Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 61.

[5] Central American Historical Institute (CAHI), "Hasenfus: Nothing But the Facts," Envio 5, 65 (November, 1986), 4-6.

The main focus will be on the Reagan doctrine and the emergence of the anti-*Sandinista* forces collectively known by their Spanish name: the *Contras*. In Spanish, *contra* generally means "against." In Nicaraguan usage, *Contra* was short for *contrarevolucionario*. First, the major tenets of the Reagan doctrine will be elaborated and analyzed. The doctrine was consistent with the post-World War II United States foreign policy ideology of containing communism and "rolling back" the global influences of the Soviet Union and Cuba, despite fundamental contradictions in implementation. Thus, for example, China's domination of Tibet was generally ignored, although the Soviet influence in Nicaragua was constructed as a "Red menace." Additionally, the United States maintained economic ties with the Soviet Union although it curtailed its economic relations with Nicaragua.[9] In outlining the principal features of the Reagan doctrine, I indicate how the written ideological pre/text for intervention was complemented by economic, military and paramilitary activities, and an ever increasing use of covert activities through the CIA. The conservative, realist ideology of policymakers led to an almost obsessive emphasis on East-West dynamics as opposed to what has since become known as "North-South" concerns. In one sense, both posit a dualism, an either/or, which preserved the prevailing order of things and, as with all dualisms, one side of the duality (in this case the South), linguistically will be constructed as inferior. In the context of the competing dualisms, North-South did not encompass the fatalism of realism insofar as it provided the intellectual and moral space to challenge, and change, the systematically asymmetrical relations of power, that is, of domination.[10] In effect, according to North-South dynamics, the United States-Nicaraguan relations was not understood simply as inevitable, unavoidable and immutable, a static "nature."

---

[6] CAHI, "Hasenfus," Envio (November, 1986), 6-7.

[7] A Nicaraguan radio announcer quoted in CAHI, "Hasenfus," Envio (November, 1986), 3.

[8] See also G. Martin, "The Immorality of the Contras' Resort to War: The Case of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force," Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, 25, 1988.

---

[9] Michael E. Conroy, "Economic Dependence, External Assistance, and 'Economic Aggression' Against Nicaragua," Latin American Perspectives 45, 12, 2 (Spring, 1985), 39-67.

[10] A good discussion of the relationship between meaning, power and ideology is John B. Thompson's "Language and ideology; a framework for analysis," The Sociological Review 35, 3 (August, 1987), 517-536.

From the specificities of the Reagan doctrine I shift the analysis to examine more closely the building blocks or markers which can clarify the evolution of the *Contras*. The latter will be reconstructed by critically analyzing public media discourse in the United States as well as the related speeches and activities of Reagan Administration's foreign policymakers. The media was the principal means whereby citizens within the United States and Nicaragua became aware of inter/national events as they related to the *Contras* although, of course, the Nicaraguans actually experienced the armed hostilities first hand. It will be important to reveal the Reagan policymakers who were involved and how this involvement both was clarified and distorted in the public media. Further, the disjointed manner whereby citizens within the United States obtained information made the ideas of "public knowledge" or "public consent" oxymoronic.

Third, this chapter shifts to a micro-level or what might be called the "nuts and bolts" dimension of the "making" of the *Contra*/revolution: how it was done, who were involved, and why. "Who" were the *Contras*? "What" factors and/or "who" made their existence, survival and activities possible? What were their activities and how was this in/consistent with their objectives. What were those objectives? A major concern of this chapter will be a deconstruction of the ma(s)king of the *Contra*/revolution, the "foundation stones" upon which it was built. I also point out what was not revealed in foreign policy discourse and media within the United States.

IV.2. The Reagan Doctrine as Ideological Warfare

The *Somocistas'* position had been stated baldly: "[C]ome the counterrevolution, there will be a massacre in Nicaragua" and further, one officer graphically clarified, "[W]e have a lot of scores to settle. There will be bodies from the border [Honduras] to Managua."[11] Similarly stated *Contra* intentions led members of the United States Congress to waver between support for the *Contras* and condemnation of their activities. Moral ambivalence and misconceptions abounded as word games perpetually upped the ante. On the one hand, Reagan was equating them to the "moral equivalent of our Founding Fathers and the brave men and women of the French Resistance."[12] Similarly, Assistant Secretary of State for InterAmerican Affairs Langhorne Motley claimed that "[T]he freedom fighters are peasants, farmers, shopkeepers, and vendors. Their leaders are without exception men who opposed Somoza."[13]

---

[11] J. Brecher, J. Walcott, D. Martin and B. Nissen, "A Secret War for Nicaragua," Newsweek (November 8, 1982), 48.

[12] Speech on March 1, 1985, cited in Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, The Central American Fact Book (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 277. Reagan's examples from the Spanish Civil War or the French Revolution should be viewed sceptically. On October 25, 1984 Reagan claimed that "if you get into the moral issue of it...I would say that the individuals that went there [the Abraham Lincoln Brigade] were, in the opinion of most Americans, fighting on the wrong side." Yet during his March 19, 1987 Press Conference he favourably described American private citizens supporting the *Contras* as analogous to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. See, Mark Green, To Err Is Reagan (San Francisco: Mother Jones magazine, 1987), 14.

On the other hand, members of Congress such as Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) balked at the *Contras'* "promise to bring to Managua a reign of terror that will make the French Revolution look like a Labour Day picnic." Harkin suggested "[T]heir [the *Contras'*] methods are those of the Marquis de Sade, not the Marquis de Lafayette."[14] He called the *Contras* "murderers, torturers, and rapists."[15] Similarly, in rejecting Reagan's "United States Founding Fathers" analogy, Representative Gerry Studds (D-Mass) retorted that "[O]ur Founding Fathers did not maintain bank accounts in the Cayman Islands."[16] These claims appear contradictory and, to a large extent, they are mutually incompatible. However, there are some elements of "truth" in Motley, Harkin and Studd's claims and, the apparent binary opposition, or contrary dictions -- contra/dictions -- must be carefully sorted out.

---

[13] Motley, Testimony before Congress, January 1985, cited in Holly Sklar, Reagan, Trilateralism and the Neoliberals: Containment and Intervention in the 1980s (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1986), 56.

[14] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 277; also, Tom Harkin, "Contras or Contadora: Military Solution or Negotiated Political Settlement," (March 26, 1985), cited in Washington Report on the Hemisphere (Washington, D.C., April 16, 1985).

[15] Harkin, cited in Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 79.

[16] The Nation (April 27, 1985), 486.

Unlike the Carter Administration, the Reagan Administration made no pretensions about supporting the new government in Nicaragua. The latter was characterized as "hostile," "unfriendly" and "uncooperative." Further, Reagan's Secretary of State, George Shultz, conjured up the words of John F. Kennedy to explain the Reagan Administration's intentions of "treating a friend like a friend" and a "foe like a foe." As Shultz noted, some twenty years earlier, Kennedy had claimed that "the United States would 'pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe in order to assure the survival of liberty'."[17] The *Sandinistas* were branded as "foe" and the "reasons" were centred in two undifferentiated "facts": first, the ideology of *Sandinistas* who, apparently, were all the "same," was partly Marxist although they were also *Sandinist* or Nicaraguan nationalists (this was obscured); and second, their choice to exercise national sovereignty by maintaining foreign relations with the Soviet Union and Cuba. These ideological "facts" were "evidence" of a foe of the United States.

In the Republican Party Platform of 1980, as well as in his State of the Union Address in 1982, and thereafter, Reagan claimed that the

---

[17] Shultz, "Power and Diplomacy in the 1980s," a speech before the Trilateral Commission, Washington, D.C., April 3, 1984; in Realism, Strength, Negotiation: Key Foreign Policy Statements of the Reagan Administration (U.S. State Department, May, 1984), 7; also "The 'Relevant' Policy Spectrum," in Sklar, Reagan, Trilateralism and the Neoliberals, 31.

United States support for the *Contras*, whom he called "freedom fighters," was support for the latter's self-defense against external aggression. The architects of this "external aggression" were identified as the Soviet Union and Cuba.[18] In voicing the Administration's opposition to totalitarianism (meaning "communism"), foreign policymakers somtimes proselytized as though this opposition was a religious duty. In fact, the religiosity with which the doctrine was espoused, and enforced, often seemed to give the policies toward Nicaragua a messianic subtext. This subtext became more explicit when the Reagan Administration accused the *Sandinistas* of "persecuting" Catholics and Jews and of executing a "genocide" against Nicaragua's indigenous peoples; these charges are critically analyzed in Chapter V. Moreover, Reagan claimed that the United States "must not break faith with those who are risking their lives on every continent from Afghanistan to Nicaragua to defy Soviet-supported aggression."[19]

Likewise Shultz characterized men such as Alfonso Robelo and Adolfo Calero, who led the civilian arm of the *Contras*, as "bear[ing] witness" to the demise of the 1979 anti-Somoza coalition. These businessmen briefly had participated in anti-Somoza activities and Robelo had served a short stint in the Government for

---

[18] R. Leiken and B. Rubin, eds., The Central American Crisis Reader (New York: Summit Books, 1987), 515-516.

[19] R. Matthews, "The Reagan Doctrine and Counterrevolution," in NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August, 1986), 14-15.

Reconstruction. Robelo and Calero's joining of the *Contras* also was advanced as a "testament" and sometimes as "proof" of the negative impact of the *Sandinistas* on the Nicaraguan domestic stage.[20]

The more explicit and Cold War features of the Reagan doctrine, and United States policy in Central America, were frequently repeated by policymakers. A central claim was made by Shultz in his April 15, 1983 speech when he concluded, "there are many reasons for us to care about what happens in Central America. One is strategic and we better remember it. What happens in Central America could endanger our own security."[21] Relatedly, it was claimed that the *Sandinistas* were "exporting revolution," as opposed to simply creating and recreating their own. According to Reagan, "the Sandinistas [were] not content to brutalize their own land. They seek to export their terror to every other country in the region."[22] This was similarly repeated by Shultz when he claimed that, "as Nicaragua's immediate neighbors [Honduras and Costa Rica], they feel directly the spillover of Nicaragua's militarization and growing internal troubles."[23]

---

[20] Shultz, "Struggle for Democracy in Central America," a Speech to the World Affairs Council and Chamber of Commerce, Dallas, April 15, 1983 in Realism, Strength, Negotiation. 127.

[21] Shultz, "Struggle for Democracy in Central America," in Realism, Strength, Negotiation, 127.

[22] Reagan, "U.S. Interests in Central America," Televised Address to the Nation, May 9, 1984, in Realism, Strength, Negotiation, 135.

Not once did Shultz or Reagan appear to recognize that the United States actually might have been contributing to these internal troubles through its interference. Moreover, a careful analysis shows that the kind of democracy championed by Shultz was not one created by the will of the Nicaraguan people, or even one which necessarily originated out of the specific historic situation of particular states. Rather, Shultz claimed the United States was "encouraging other nations to adopt principles of self-determination, economic freedom, and the rule of law which are the *foundation stones of American society*" [emphasis added].[24] Shultz was interested in the reproduction of the United States in Latin America. As I discussed in Chapter II, this form of self-aggrandizement has long roots in American self-definitions from Thomas Jefferson to Woodrow Wilson; however, its repetition in the Reagan years was as farce.

The Central American republics were described oppositionally, and even then, only in terms of United States security. As Shultz contructed the position, what happened in the republics was a potential threat to the United States security. However, in this security matrix, although the reverse was also true and the United

---

[23] Shultz, "Struggle for Democracy in Central America," in Realism, Strength, Negotiation, 127.

[24] Shultz, "Foreign Aid and U.S. National Interests," Speech at the Southern Center for International Studies, Atlanta, February 24, 1983, in Realism, Strength, Negotiation, 145.

States was a potential threat to the security of each Central American republic, the latter did not have the material power to "guarantee" their security in the same way. In the one-way mirror, from which Shultz viewed Latin America, this possibility could not be seen.

The second reason Shultz proffered for "caring" about Central America was moral, namely a concern for human rights, a government of the majority, and freedom. In tying security and moral concerns together, Shultz attempted to advance the belief that actions done in the United States' "security interests" also were morally defensible or, minimally, that they had a moral end. This linguistic and epistemic "slippage," both from one in which the means justified the end to one in which "ought" became "is," was problematic. Shultz' words, in the bright glare of the United States' actual foreign policy, were emptied of all decipherable meaning. His words recalled to mind Noam Chomsky's and George Lakoff's separate, but related, analyses to the effect that what "they" who are "foes" do is called "totalitarian" and "propaganda" and what "we" who are "friends" do is called "democracy" and "moral education."[25] However, this view of friends as democratic was not mirrored in material reality. For example, in republics such as Guatemala and El Salvador, "security interests" often resulted in the repression of citizens' political participation, and war often led to curtailed freedom and, violated human rights. The actuality of the later, as compared to Shultz' merely rhetorical sentiments, often was obscured in these speeches.

---

[25] See, Chomsky, Language and Politics, ed. C.P. Otero (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988); and Lakoff, "Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify the Gulf War," Linguistics Department, University of California at Berkeley (December, 1990).

Similar principles of foreign policy were repeated by Reagan about a week later. On April 27, 1983, before a joint sitting of Congress, Reagan outlined four tenets of United States policy in Central America. He pledged to support: democracy, reform and human rights, economic development, efforts which ensured the security of the region's threatened nations, and efforts toward dialogue and negotiation among countries as well as within particular countries. In order to accomplish this, Reagan claimed the United States would use its "powers of persuasion, and our legitimate 'leverage' to bolster humane democratic systems."[26] This impulse toward an externally defined democracy was contested by a number of political actors within Nicaragua and from different perspectives. Consider two examples: the *Sandinistas* and the Miskitos, one of Nicaragua's largest indigenous groups.

In contrast to the Reagan Administration, the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional's* 1980 vision was that "democracy is not measured only in the political terrain and is not reduced to the participation of the people in elections. Democracy...means participation of the people in political, economic, social and cultural affairs."[27] This was elaborated by Father Miguel D'Escoto, a Jesuit priest and Nicaragua's Foreign Minister. D'Escoto claimed that the "democratic aspiration is not to be confused with an aspiration to have just the formality of democracy; we are talking about real participation."[28] D'Escoto outlined the *Sandinistas'* conception of "real" democracy as one which entailed "the right to work, to a family wage, to learn, to read, to write -- all those different rights that provide us with an opportunity to participate and not be manipulated."[29] According to this vision, there cannot be a genuine democracy if social inequities are not redressed, and the standards of living are not improved for peasants and workers. There cannot be democracy and freedom if citizens were "enslaved" by illiteracy and excluded by elites from active participation in the political life of the nation.

---

[26] Reagan, "Central America: Defending Our Vital Interests," Realism, Strength, Negotiation, 130-131.

In his speech before the United Nations Security Council, Ortega claimed that the Nicaraguan people, "who have so long been oppressed and who are determined to free themselves" continue to struggle "in the face of the resistance of privileged minorities which are at pains to halt the changes which, sooner of later, must come to these unjust societies."[30] From Ortega's point of view, Nicaragua under the Somozas was an unjust society. This injustice was maintained both by domestic and foreign privileged minorities who were prepared to go to considerable pains, such as with the *Contras*, to resist change and preserve the status quo. For Ortega, in societies such as revolutionary Nicaragua, resistance to injustice was an expression of freedom; it also was inevitable. Posed this way, the Reagan Administration was advocating freedom for the privileged minorities and the "form" of democracy exemplified by elections; the *Sandinistas* were struggling for freedom for the dispossessed majority and their substantive participation in all avenues of political life.

---

[27] FSLN, 1980; cited in Dot Tuer, "Fearful Symmetry; Nicaraguan Self-Determination & American Rhetoric," Fuse (June/July, 1990), 24.

[28] D'Escoto, "An Unfinished Canvas: Building a New Nicaragua," in A. Walsh, B. McCabe, K. Rose and S. Murphy, eds., Nicaragua: An Unfinished Canvas (Dublin: The Nicaraguan Book Collective, 1988), 54.

[29] D'Escoto, "An Unfinished Canvas," 54.

Miguel D'Escoto found the United States' accusation of "exporting revolution" rather puzzling, and hypocritical, given Shultz' claim that the Reagan Administration's "interests" were to engage in exactly the pursuits that were being opposed in Nicaragua. D'Escoto did not accept the idea that revolutions were analogous to products or commodities. In his view, "[A] revolution is not an exportable item. Revolutions can take place only when a people decide to make it possible."[31] This was a perspective which harkened back to both Marx and Mill's objection to foreign interventions which sought to impose governments the people, themselves, had not created or chosen and may not have supported. D'Escoto further claimed that the ideology of the Nicaraguan Revolution was based on the principle of self-determination in the tradition of Sandino; however, "Sandinismo is not nationalistic in any sense that leads us to believe that we have discovered a formula that is good for any other country. We believe that, just as we are looking for our own way, every other country has to look for its own way."[32] For these reasons, D'Escoto, and many ordinary Nicaraguans, found it a strange proposition that the pain and suffering they endured to liberate themselves from Somoza somehow could be commodified and exported, except, perhaps, as an idea, an example. In this sense, the Nicaraguan Revolution was no more exportable than the American or French Revolutions. It was apparent that neither Reagan nor Shultz could grasp the contradiction in their own logic: the Nicaraguan right to self-determination based on *Sandinismo* was incompatible with "the foundation stones of American society" in the same way that *Sandinismo* did not necessarily reflect the experiences of American society.

---

[30] Ortega, "Let There be Peace in Central America," in P. Rosset and J. Vandermeer, eds., The Nicaraguan Reader (New York: Grove Press, 1983), 8.

[31] D'Escoto, "An Unfinished Canvas," 54.

Second, the indigenous aspirations for self-determination were incompatible with both *Sandinismo*, as initially interpreted, *and* the foundation stones of American society. These conceptions of democracy and freedom championed by the Reagan Administration and the *Sandinistas* represent but two of the more orthodox views espoused in Western political traditions. However, to focus exclusively on one or the other, either/or, is to obscure other legitimate and contesting perspectives. The Reagan Administration and the *Sandinistas'* conceptualizations did not include, nor could their assumptions fully grasp, Nicaragua's indigenous peoples' conception of democracy and freedom. The either/or views which typified Cold War political conceptualizations denied legitimacy and meaning to this difference.

---

[32] D'Escoto, "An Unfinished Canvas," 54.

The "Indian struggle" was their "own struggle" which was not about democracy, and certainly not in favour of majority rule which, to them, translated into more Spanish domination. Bernard Nietschmann wrote in "The Indian Resistance in Nicaragua," that Nicaragua's indigenous peoples claimed that they were not fighting for democracy since it was something they never had experienced under any government, whether of the political Left, Centre or Right, nor was it something that had benefitted any indigenous movement across the continent. Instead, the indigenous groups claimed they were "fighting for something that was taken away from us. We are fighting for our land. For an Indian freedom is land, not democracy."[33] This kind of claim was in direct contradistinction to the *Sandinistas'* political vision of "integrating" the indigenous peoples into the Revolution, as well as to the Reagan

---

[33] Bernard Nietschmann, "The Indian Resistance in Nicaragua," Akwesasne Notes (Spring, 1984), 12-13.

Administration's demand for elections as the form of democratic expression, *par excellence*. In this respect, the indigenous struggle was neither counterrevolutionary nor anti-democratic. Given their self-defined objectives for autonomy over their lands and cultures and constitutional recognition as "distinct peoples," their aspirations and pursuits were, in fact, *revolutionary* since these were aspirations which no other indigenous movement, on any continent, had obtained.

The indigenous struggle for freedom was *contra* or against the *Sandinistas* in the sense that it was opposed to integration with the Spanish majority. In this sense, it was also *contra* the dominant *Contra* groups which were dominated by those of Spanish-origin as well. Further, as a matter of chronological representation, the indigenous opposition to the *Sandinistas* began in February, 1981. This was one year before the main *Contra* group comprised of *Somocistas*, *Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense* (FDN). It began a full two years before the *Alianza Revolucionaria Democratica* (ARDE), comprised primarily of former *Sandinistas* or their collaborators.[34] Moreover, as Miskito leader Brooklyn Rivera stated in a speech entitled "Revolution and Justice," in Seattle, Washington in 1985, the indigenous struggle for justice was distinct despite the paternalistic references to the Miskitos by the United States media as "U.S.-backed disaffected

---

[34] Nietschmann, "The Indian Resistance in Nicaragua," 12.

Indian contras."[35] Rivera likened this characterization, which trivalized the agency of the indigenous leaders, to "French backed disaffected colonists." Such a reference obscured the distinct aspirations of the indigenous peoples. Reducing the indigenous struggle to the policies of the Reagan Administration masked the fact that the indigenous peoples did not want a return to *Somocismo*, as advocated by the FDN, nor did they want majority rule in any of its traditional European manifestations.

Rivera argued that, although the Nicaraguan Revolution gave the *Sandinistas* power, it did not give them authority over Indian land and peoples, and thus the Indian struggle was for the right "to maintain communal ownership of their village lands which collectively comprise Indian nations" as well as "to continue their primary allegiance to those nations as distinct peoples."[36] In Rivera's view, "[T]he revolution [Nicaraguan] cannot succeed or survive in Nicaragua if there is not justice for the Indian people" and that notion of justice had to include the right to self-determination.[37] These complexities were studiously ignored by the Reagan Administration which continued to operate according to a script which did not, in any meaningful way, match the complex debates occurring on the Nicaraguan political stage. This ignorance was evident throughout the Reagan years.

---

[35] Rivera, "Revolution and Justice," in The Nicaraguan Revolution, ed., Gary E. McCuen (Hudson, Wisconsin: Gary E. McCuen Publications, Inc., 1986), 90-91.

[36] McCuen, The Nicaraguan Revolution, 91.

[37] Rivera, "Revolution and Justice," in The Nicaraguan Revolution, ed., McCuen, 90.

In another speech before a joint session of Congress on February 4, 1986, Reagan claimed that for all "those imprisoned in regimes held captive, to those beaten for daring to fight for freedom and democracy...you are not alone, freedom fighters. America will support you with moral and material assistance."[38] In addition to the now predictable litany of target states, Reagan specifically recommitted his support for the *Contras* opposed to the *Sandinistas*. Further, Reagan stated that "[T]he national security of all the Americas is at stake in Central America. If we cannot defend ourselves there, we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere. Our credibility would collapse, our alliances would crumble, and the safety of our homeland would be put in jeopardy."[39] In effect, Reagan argued that the security of every country in South, Central and North America depended on what happened in Central America. This apparently egalitarian interest in "every" republic was self-interested and disingenuous; this is evident in Reagan's shift from "all the Americas" to "we," meaning the United States. In his view, if the United States could not exercise power over (domination) the Central American republics, this would lead to the United States' diminished credibility worldwide.

---

[38] Matthews, "The Reagan Doctrine and the Counterrevolution," 14.

[39] Reagan, "Defending Our Vital Interests," in Realism, Strength, Negotiation, 131.

The United States' reputation was based upon brute strength, namely its ability to dominate republics such as Nicaragua. This was more than simple melodramatic "red baiting." Although the logic was circular, Reagan suggested, as Athens did to Melos, that the maintenance of United States domination required that it prevailed over "every" republic including Nicaragua. Again, this was history repeating itself. Further, not to prevail over Nicaragua, apparently would have damaged the possibility of *prevailing over*, that is dominating, any other state in the future. This claim represented both an epistemological and moral dilemma: what undergirded, motivated, inspired not only the impulse to share power, or power-to, but to dominate? As Reagan articulated it, this need to dominate was directly linked to "the safety of our [United States'] homeland," implying that the choice was either domination of Nicaragua or jeopardizing the safety of United States citizens.

Both Reagan and Shultz' speeches reveal an Administration committed to intervene in Central American affairs. Arguably, the claims about democracy, freedom and human rights were advanced in order to make multiple global interventions palatable in "our homeland." These speeches were pre/texts; they "justified" interventions in the "homelands" of the other peoples: in Central America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Conspicuously absent were interventions in European states, the Soviet Union and China, when these countries did not conform to the dictates of United States policymakers. Perhaps this apparent contradiction reflected the Athenian claim that "equals must be treated equally" meaning, in this case, that the Europeans, as equals, could enjoy their right to self-determination or freedom from unwarranted foreign intervention. Over time, the architects of the Reagan doctrine committed, and recommitted, the United States to an active, militant support for "resistance movements [that] now challenge Communist regimes installed or maintained by the military power of the Soviet Union and its colonial agents."[40] Nicaragua, Ethopia, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Angola were identified as "colonial agents."

Identifying states such as Nicaragua, Ethopia and Afghanistan as "colonial agents" was an ironic inversion of power, a form of *dissimulation.* By dissimulation is meant the particular deployment of language whereby ideology is manifested through a process of denying, obscuring and/or concealing the relations of domination.[41] It was used by the United States policymakers, consciously and, perhaps unconsciously, to legitimate their own power/domination. Most of the states identified as "colonial agents" actually had experienced colonization or imperialism. Yet, the Reagan doctrine constructed them as actual "agents" of the colonizers and, hence, as actively participating in their own "lack" of independence and their neocolonial status. Further, in this construction, the United States was the "liberator" of colonized nations. Thus, by naming states such as Nicaragua "colonial agents," Reagan policymakers attempted to obscure the actual imbalance in power between the United States and Nicaragua and to veil the political-economic and military relations of which the Reagan policies were an integral part. This dissimulation was amplified when the United States support for the *Contras* was represented as a support for the "legitimate aspirations of the Nicaraguan people," as opposed to a more truthful representation, namely support for neocolonization via domination. The support for the *Contras* was about the United States' "credibility," based upon its ability to dominate. Representing the United States as a "liberator" of the "colonized" was an outright lie. Only in a relativist nirvana of language games would this claim be allowed to exist simply as one competing "truth," among many, despite all historical and material evidence to the contrary.

---

[40] Reagan, "Freedoms, Regional Security and Global Peace," Address to Congress, United States Information Services Backgrounder (24 March, 1986).

[41] Thompson, "Language and ideology," 521.

IV.3. The Reagan Doctrine and Counterrevolutions

The specific formulation of the Reagan doctrine was a radical expansion of previous presidental doctrines. Reagan magnified the centrality of containment by making the whole world his theatre of operations.[42] For Reagan, "the goal of containing Soviet expansionism...[was] more relevant and more important than ever."[43] Part of the ideological containment of communism and of "rolling back" the Soviet Union's sphere of influence, was to support "freedom fighters." These were identified as the *Contras* of Nicaragua (then based in Honduras and Costa Rica), Unita of Angola (then based in South Africa), the Sihanouk-led coalition of Kampuchea and the *Mujahiddin* fighters opposed to the Karmal regime in Afghanistan. Between 1986 and 1987 alone, the Angolan counter-revolutionary forces, Unita, and their leader Jonas Savimbi, the paradoxical black, Mandarin-speaking, Maoist-trained guerrilla, received upwards of 10 million dollars to fund a counterrevolution against the Mozambican government and to sabotage the internal infrastructure of Frontline states, that is, those states on the "frontline" of South Africa, another supporter of Savimbi.[44] Much of the money for Savimbi was funnelled through "friendly" states like Zaire. The latter's president, Sese Sekou Mobuto was the brother-in-law of Holden Roberto who had led the Angolan National Liberation Front, the precursor to Unita. In the 1970s, with CIA and Israeli support, it had tried to preempt the revolutionary victory of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).[45] Similarly, in 1986 the Afghani fighters received upwards of 250 million dollars to fund their opposition to Soviet relations with the Afghani government. In that same year, the *Contras* were appropriated 100 million dollars in Congressional assistance to subvert the *Sandinistas.*[46] In effect, similar kinds of reactionary subversions were occurring worldwide.

---

[42] Amitav Acharya, "The Reagan Doctrine and International Security," Monthly Review 38, 10 (March 1987), 28-36.

[43] Reagan, "Freedom, Regional Security and Global Peace."

[44] Jane Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy: South Africa and Central America (Boston: South End Press, 1987), 42, 59.

A second major component of the Reagan doctrine was support for regimes which were believed to be threatened by communism; they were economically, and primarily militarily, buttressed. Thus, for example, between 1982 and 1987 Pakistan which was deemed to be threatened by Afghanistan, received some 3.2 billion dollars in military and economic aid, with the estimated amount for the period 1987 to 1993 about 4.2 billion dollars.[47] Similarly, in Central America, the regimes of Honduras and Costa Rica were constructed as facing immediate danger because they bordered Nicaragua; El Salvador received the most assistance because of its own revolutionary movement. Between 1986 and 1987, Congressional support for the containment doctrine and *Contra* funding peaked. In 1986 military and economic aid to Honduras was upwards of 230 million dollars; and

---

[45] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 58-59.

[46] Far Eastern Economic Review (10 April, 1986), 33; and Time (10 February, 1986), 31; and Jane Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy: South Africa and Central America (Boston: South End Press, 1987).

[47] Far Eastern Economic Review (10 April, 1986), 32-33; and Department of State Bulletin (February, 1985), 28.

El Salvador received some 480 million dollars.[48] This did not include "emergency" or covert disbursements.

A third significant component of the Reagan doctrine was the frequent use of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Special Forces of the United States military.[49] Under Reagan, the CIA's budget was increased by some 25 per cent over that of the Carter Administration, and most of that funding was directed toward clandestine activities and "proxy" or "surrogate" paramilitary operations.[50] Thus, in 1986 alone, the CIA's covert operations budget was about 500 million dollars and, between 1981 and 1986, over one billion dollars was spent to finance clandestine and paramilitary operations.[51] The number of CIA personnel, which had been reduced during the Carter years, increased by some 3,000, with most going to the Department of Operations (DO).[52] These numbers only included those personnel who were United States agents, and not "outside assets," a euphemism for mercenaries hired under contract or intelligence and military agents of "friendly" states acting as

---

[48] Department of State Bulletin (May, 1985), 67, 83.

[49] Acharya, "The Reagan Doctrine and International Security," 31.

[50] R. Matthews, "The Reagan Doctrine and Counterrevolution," 14-18 and "The CIA's War," 19-27, NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August, 1986).

[51] Matthews, "The CIA's War," 20-21.

[52] Matthews, "The CIA's War," 21.

"proxies."[53] In 1981, by Executive Order, Reagan went so far as to authorize covert activities within the United States, including activities directed against particular United States citizens and organizations. The principal targets were those groups, such as the Sanctuary Movement and the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), which were engaged in supporting Central Amerian refugees and victims/survivors of human rights abuse by tyrannical regimes the Reagan Administration insisted on calling "democracies."[54]

During the first six years under CIA Director William Casey, the CIA's budget grew faster than the budget of the Department of Defense.[55] Much of this activity was geared toward asserting United States hegemony through funding "freedom fighters." This was often carried out in conjunction with the Special Forces of the United States military. The Special Forces were developed in the 1960s during John F. Kennedy's Administration and Kennedy's focus on "counterinsurgency."[56] These forces were particularly useful for training recruits to be insurgents or, conversely, for training

---

[53] Matthews, "The Reagan Doctrine and Counterrevolution," 14-18 and his "The CIA's War," 19-27.

[54] "Church Workers in Trial Defend Aid to Aliens," The New York Times (November 20, 1985), A6; The Washington Post (March 31, 1986); CovertAction Information Bulletin, No. 16 (March 1982), 29.

[55] Acharya, "The Reagan Doctrine and International Security," 30-31.

[56] Acharya, "The Reagan Doctrine and International Security," 31.

"friendly" governments how to counter-insurgents. The Special Forces are divided into "teams," and the most renowned is comprised of twelve men: the "A Team." The "A Team" reportedly is capable of recruiting, organizing, equipping and training a guerrilla force of some 650 men (battalion size).[57] In the first three years of the Reagan Administration, some 39 Special Forces teams were mobilized to train the armed forces of 15 "friendly" countries, including Honduras, El Salvador, Egypt and Somalia.[58] With few exceptions, the Reagan doctrine focused on interventions which did not require direct United States involvement; the intelligence and Special Forces agents deliberately remained in the shadows. Where they were directly involved, it was not recognized officially as policy. The obvious exceptions were interventions such as the invasion of Grenada and the bombing of Libya which were quick and did not incur heavy United States casualties.

The Reagan doctrine, focusing on "strength," antagonistically confronted the Soviet Union and its allies. It was strongly supported by staunch conservatives. In "U.S. Stakes in Central America," for example, Phyllis Schlafly championed what she saw as a conservative revitalization. Intervention, in her view, was both a strategic and legal/moral duty; however, her conception of morality would have made Thrasymachus blush. According to Schlafly, intervention against communism was "[T]he legal obligations of our President under the Monroe Doctrine, and the Organization of American States and the Rio Grande Treaties" and, further, these treaties made it "the duty of our President to take action against the aggression in Nicaragua, as we did in Grenada."[59] Schlafly's universalization of the Monroe doctrine, a doctrine of imperialism, apparently was "legitimate" simply because it was professed by a United States president. This form of legitimation was based upon Monroe's projection of United States preoccupations into inter/national spaces. It did not reflect the "legitimate" aspiration of most Latin Americans. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter I, Morgenthau, a staunch "realist" like Schlafly, challenged doctrinal assertions merely based upon what he identified as brute strength and justified exclusively by self-aggrandizement.

---

[57] James L. Estep, "U.S. Army Special Forces 'A' Team: The Cutting Edge," Asian-Pacific Defense Forum (Fall 1983), 40-45.

[58] Noel C. Koch, "Special Operation Forces," Asia-Pacific Defense Forum (Winter, 1983-84), 26.

In light of this discussion of language and ideology, the next section examines the practical "origins" of the *Contras*, and what, in the words of Schultz aptly might be call the "foundation stones" of the *Contra*/revolution. I focus on the Nicaraguan recruiters and United States policymakers involved; the strategies considered, and the efforts to create (and mask) the support for a counterrevolution, as opposed to the "public story" of interdicting arms to the *Farabundo Martí* guerrillas in El Salvador. This critical narration will reveal the disjuncture between ideological discourse and the practical steps of making a counterrevolution. First, I begin by revisiting my discussion of the counter-revolutionary activities which started during the Carter Administration.

---

[59] Schlafly, The Phyllis Schlafly Report (August, 1985), 1-3.

IV.4 "Foundation Stones" of the *Contra*/Revolution

After Somoza's overthrow in July 1979, many *Somocistas* and former members of the deposed National Guard fled to Honduras. Some of these Guardsmen, still armed, immediately commenced attacks against Nicaraguan civilians, property and natural resources.[60] Not long thereafter, news reports began surfacing about the involvement of the CIA. These armed activities compelled Nicaragua to call an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council on March 25, 1982. The focal question: Was it true, as Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega Saavedra claimed, that despite the United States' rhetoric of desiring peace, the Reagan Administration was supporting counterrevolutionaries in Miami and Honduras?[61] Or, was Reagan's Ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick, right in dismissing these charges and psychoanalyzing the *Sandinistas*?

---

[60] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 276-277; Dieter Eich and Carlos Rincon, The Contras: Interviews with Anti-Sandinistas (San Francisco: Synthesis Publications, 1985), iii.

[61] Ortega, "Let There Be Peace in Central America," in Rosset and Vandermeer, The Nicaraguan Reader, 8-14.

According to Kirkpatrick's diagnosis, the *Sandinistas* were suffering from a delusion; they were paranoid and, further, were falsely projecting their domestic problems onto an innocent United States.[62] Determining the "truths" about armed hostilities, especially of a covert nature, is no easy task. Whether or not the *Sandinistas* were paranoid is open to dispute. What is not questionable is the fact that there were, indeed, armed forces opposed to the *Sandinistas* training in Florida and California, as well as in the zone of Cacamuya and the Department of El Paraíso in Honduras.[63] It was also true that the training of counterrevolutionaries in Florida and California violated the United States' own Neutrality Act. In fact, as discussed in Chapter III, efforts to make a counterrevolution started in 1979. Thus, in order to continue this line of enquiry, I want to elaborate upon how recruitment, by CIA-funded Bermúdez and Sanchez, produced the early version of the *Contras*. As with the previous section, the subsequent sections are concerned with the practical and material aspects of the ma(s)king of counterrevolutionary policies and practices.

---

[62] Kirkpatrick, "A Paranoid Style of Politics," in Rosset and Vandermeer, The Nicaraguan Reader, 14-20.

[63] Rosset and Vandermeer, The Nicaraguan Reader, 10; R. Matthews, "Franchising Aggression," in NACLA Report on the Americas: Sowing the Dragon's Teeth (July/August, 1986), 28-29.

1979-1980

An internal examination of the less visible dynamics of the *Contras'* evolution starts with the Guardsmen and, more generally, Somoza supporters or *Somocistas*. In the months that preceeded the fall of Somoza, and in the months immediately after July 1979, there was an exodus of National Guardsmen from Nicaragua who were given safe asylum in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras; some went to Miami.[64] El Salvador and Guatemala were preferred destinations for the Guards. For example, during one angry and desperate dispute over relocation, one officer leaving under the auspices of Guard Commander Lieutenant Colonel Franklin Montenegro (Rivas), threateningly demanded, "[W]e are going to El Salvador. We want nothing to do with Nicaragua and not with Costa Rica either. It is full of Communists...there is no choice and there is no discussion."[65] Some Guardsmen even accused Carter of being a Communist for not supporting Somoza in the final hours of the dictatorship; Carter's ambivalent support was blamed for the unravelling of Somoza's power and the Guard's demise.[66] Other

---

[64] This analysis is built upon several key sources including interviews conducted by Eich and Rincon with active *Contra* members in The Contras (1985); Dickey, With the Contras: A Reporter in the Wilds of Nicaragua (1987); Sam Dillon's Commandos: The CIA and Nicaraguan Contra Rebels (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1991).

[65] Dickey, With the Contras, 27. Col. Montenegro was one of the Guardsmen reported to the 1978 House Foreign Relations Committee as being responsible for gross human rights abuses.

[66] Dickey, With the Contras, 24, 18.

Guardsmen stripped themselves of their Guard regalia and tossed their M-16s into the San Juan River. Some units, such as the one known as the "Rattlesnakes," maintained strict discipline as well as kept all weaponry.[67] In addition to the Guards, a number of families who had supported Somoza or who had a husband, brother or other family member in the Guard, left during the uncertainties of the transition months between governments.

The Guards often had been heralded as the armed force within Latin America that had the most men trained by the United States, including at the elite military academy at Fort Leavenworth, and also in other prestigous military academies in Panama, Brazil, Argentina and Peru.[68] Consider the example of Isaías Cuadra Espinoza, former head of the First Battalion of the Guard. Cuadra Espinoza was a seasoned officer who had trained at the National Academy of the Civil Guard in Peru as well as Nicaragua's Military Academy. He claimed that officers such as himself could not serve the new government because "we are separated by ideology, and then there is the matter of military honor, which prohibits such integration."[69] According to the ideology of the Guards which divided the world into "ally" or "enemy," it was dishonourable to collaborate with the enemy, especially after defeat. Implicit in this was that Cuadra Espinoza, and men like him, were loyal allies to Somoza, not to Nicaragua as such. As such, the Guards could not serve the new government although it represented the will of the Nicaraguan people.

---

[67] Dickey, With the Contras, 28.

[68] Eich and Rincon, The Contras; Matthews, "Franchising Aggression," 35.

[69] "'Honor Prevented Us From Serving the New Regime': Conversations with Isaías Cuadra Espinoza," Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 6 and 1-10.

Cuadra Espinoza claimed that because of the Guards' conservative ideology and service to Somoza, the institution of the Guard was unfairly degraded by critics, and consequently, the Guards were disarmed and the institution destroyed. However, in his estimation, "all of the officers, the entire National Guard, were proud of their service and fulfilled their duties conscientiously."[70] Thus, according to this perspective, honour, military pride and incompatible ideology made an agreement with the new government "impossible." Third, officers such as Cuadra Espinoza felt the Guard lost for political reasons. Cuadra Espinoza did not think there was anything fundamentally wrong or corrupt about the Somoza regime nor the Guard. They did not think their defeat was because the *Sandinistas* were militarily more adept or had greater popular support, but because the *Sandinistas* had greater international support. Rather, "[T]he reasons for the defeat were political. Politics prevented us from receiving the necessary support--the materials we needed, munitions, adequate weapons--so that we could operate in a manner appropriate to the military situation."[71]

---

[70] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 6-7.

[71] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 9.

Ironically he did not see the reverse logic: it was because of politics that the Guard had received international military support; it was because of politics that they were denied further military support. This was not an abitrary occurrence but directly related to what had happened to the Guard under Somoza; honourable service to Somoza often meant a dishonourable existence for ordinary citizens, especially political opponents.

It had been humiliating for the Guard to be the first modern armed force on the continent to be defeated by guerrillas, where such efforts had failed or minimally had not been completely successful in Guatemala, El Salvador, Venezuela, Argentina and Peru. This defeat was, perhaps, paralleled only by Sandino and his guerrillas' heroic acts against the United States in the 1920s and 1930s and by the Cuban Revolution. There were wounded prides, the desire for revenge and redemption. These motivating factors undergirded the retaliatory acts of sabotage and terrorism which almost immediately followed the fall of Somoza and the dismantling of the National Guard. The probability that the desire for revenge would lead to counterrevolutionary activities did not escape the *Sandinistas*. In July 1979, *Commandante* Dora María Tellez observed that "[W]e know they are armed and in the mountains and that they come down at night to the cities and kill our people."[72] However, it might have been just as likely that after the initial desire for revenge, these men would have settled down to life in their respective new countries. Some might have returned to Nicaragua at a later date. Whether these possibilities would have transpired was not to be known since the United States, Israel and Argentina intervened and encouraged the continuation of anti-*Sandinista* armed hostilities.

---

[72] Dickey, With the Contras, 53.

In the months after the ousting of Somoza, many of those opposed to the changes in Nicaragua were contacted and recruited by Bermudez and other senior officers. Contact was made especially with those former Guardsmen who were in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Miami. In Guatemala, Francisco Urcuyo and his close compatriots founded the *Frente Revolucionario Nicaraguense* or Frenica. There were about 45 men in total.[73] Francisco Urcuyo had been a Vice-president in the Somoza government. After Urcuyo left for Miami, "Colonel Lau" became instrumental in recuiting for Frenica.[74] "Col. Lau" was actually Major Ricardo "Chino" Lau, Somoza's top intelligence officer. In the very earliest stages, the group Frenica was engaged in recruiting and training stalwart *Somocista* Guardsmen. In armed rebel bands, they carried out acts of sabotage within Nicaragua; acts of loyalty to Somoza, and acts of revenge for their resounding defeat.[75] This group of some 45 men received minimal financial assistance from the Guatemalan Army.[76]

---

[73] "The Gringos Know How To Do Things: Conversations with 'Pecos Bill'," Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 187.

[74] In "Orders Are To Be Carried Out," Pedro Javier Núñez Cabezas referred to the recruiter as "Colonel Lau"; see Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 45. He meant Maj. Ricardo "Chino" Lau. Also, Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus (ACFPC), "Who Are the Contras?," Congressional Report-House 131, 48 (April 23, 1985), H2337-H2339; and ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership Still Former Somoza Officers," Congressional Record-Senate 132, 42 (March 19, 1986), S3026-S3030.

Some of the recruited exiles, both those who left voluntarily out of loyalty to Somoza, and those who felt compelled to leave for fear of reprisal, formed other rebel armed bands and/or loose-knit political associations. These groups included the National Liberation Army (ELN) which was made-up primarily of non-officer Guardsmen led by Pedro Ortega, a business partner of Somoza.[77] There was also the Nicaraguan Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) which was led by Somoza's son, Anastasio Somoza Portocarrero, who was variously referred to as "Tacho III" or "Chigüin." Other groups included: the Nicaraguan Democratic Armed Forces (FADN), the Anti-Communist Army and the Anti-Communist Revolutionary Armed Forces. At their peak between 1980 and the formation of the FDN, the total recruits to these groups were about three thousand.[78] The principal funding at the time came from Argentina which, as noted, had been solicited by the CIA in 1980 after Reagan had won the United

---

[75] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 277.

[76] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 187, 48, 51.

[77] William I. Robinson and Kent Norsworthy, David and Goliath: The U.S. War Against Nicaragua (New York: Monthly Review Press), 44.

[78] Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 44; Rosa Pasos, "Report on Military Aggression Against Nicaragua by U.S. Imperialism," Testimony before the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, in On Trial, ed. Dixon, 30-33.

States presidential elections. This almost immediate counterrevolutionary support contradicted the claims made by Reagan and Kirkpatrick that they tried to establish relations with the *Sandinistas* but were rebuffed. The Argentinians provided advisors and trainers.[79] This began the CIA-*Contra* collaboration with the government of General Galtieri, one of Latin America's most repressive regimes.

In addition, the CIA also had been funding a group in Miami which described itself as an anti-*Sandinista* exile party called the Nicaraguan Democratic Union (UDN). It was headed by Francisco "El Chicano" Cardenal.[80] After the triumph, Cardenal had sat in the Nicaraguan Council of State as Vice-president. In 1980, he and Jorge "the Magician" Salazar sought anti-*Sandinista* help from the Carter Administration and Venezuela. Finally, after a trip to El Salvador, Cardenal noted that "[T]he Salvadorans were going to give us territory for training, and arms, and they were going to give us money, too."[81] These groups were marginal and later many disbanded. Those which remained, mostly in skeleton form, were incorporated into the FDN.

In 1980, the two *Somocistas*, Bermúdez and Sanchez, continued contacting and recruiting the hundreds of officers of the Guard who fled Nicaragua to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The recruits were placed on the payroll of the *Legión 15 de Septiembre*, named after the day which commemorates Nicaragua's independence from Spain.[82] The payroll funds at this time came from several sources, including Argentinian intelligence officials who had begun to operate out of Honduras and Costa Rica. Then it was assumed by many observers of the *Contras* that funding came from the immense personal wealth of Arístide Sanchez and his brother, a former National Assembly deputy from Somoza's Liberal Party, Enrique "the Cuckoo" Sanchez. The two brothers had amassed a fortune under Somoza. An Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus investigative report entered into the Senate record in April 1986, claimed that this early incarnation of the *Contras* "carried out sabotage raids and assassinations inside Nicaragua."[83] Finally, under the auspices of the CIA in 1981, Bermúdez and Sanchez "founded" the CIA-funded FDN which continued armed hostilities against Nicaragua. In the next section, I provide a textured review and analysis of the "makers" of the *Contra*/revolution; the men who, in fact, were described by Reagan as the moral equivalent of the "Founding Fathers" of the United States. First, it presupposed that there were no inhabitants in the Americas. Second, and more to the point, the analogy called into question the character of either the so-called "Founding Fathers" or the person (and his knowledge of history) making the claim.

---

[79] Los Angeles Times (3 March, 1985), cited in Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 44.

[80] Matthews, "The CIA's War," 22; Dickey, With the Contras, 33.

[81] Dickey, With the Contras, 80.

---

[82] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Report-Senate (March, 1986), S3029. Herein after called "Légion."

[83] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate (March, 1986), S3029. Herein after called "Caucus."

Profile of a *Contra*

Prior to the FDN formation, there were between six to ten men of varying military and political backgrounds who were the major architects of the irregular forces, the Légion. Colonel Bermúdez and Arístides Sanchez were instrumental.[84] Before the triumph, Sanchez had been operating his businesses out of Miami, Florida and the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa. Bermúdez, on the other hand, had been enjoying a career filled with "plums" from Somoza.[85] Bermúdez was one of the most experienced Guardsmen and, later, his military expertise made him a favoured son of the CIA. A military engineer, he graduated from Nicaragua's Military Academy; as well he obtained training at Brazil's *Agulhas Negros* Military Academy, the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the *Escuela Las Américas* in the Panama Canal

---

[84] ACFPC, "Who Are the Contras?," in Congressional Record-House (April, 1985), H2335-H2337; and ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership Still Somoza Officers," in Congressional Record-Senate (March, 1986), S3038.

[85] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate (March, 1986), 3029.

Zone.[86] From 1976 to 1979, he was Somoza's Defense Attache in Washington which, according to the State Department, exempted him from responsibility for any human rights violations committed by the Somoza regime during Nicaragua's "civil war."[87] However, according to the Caucus' 1986 report, Bermúdez was favoured by Somoza and, as a result, had been granted the command of the National Guard's contingent to the Dominican Republic after the United States invasion of 1965.[88] Although the Nicaraguan forces were largely symbolic, the fact that Bermúdez commanded these forces, in addition to accepting the position of attaché, does not suggest he was averse to representing the Somoza regime. Further, while an attaché in Washington he tried, unsuccessfully, to procure military aid from the Carter Administration for the National Guards.[89] United States officials apparently liked Bermúdez because he "fit the profile" of a proxy leader in that he "was malleable, controllable, docile" and spoke English.[90] In the CIA's view, he was an "ideal asset."

---

[86] Ironically when Bermudez spent a term at the Inter-American Defense College in Washington, D.C. in August 1975, his thesis was entitled "Psycho-Social Causes of Subversion." It was after this that he was appointed Defense Attache by Somoza Debayle; see Dillon, Commandos, 62.

[87] See State Department, "Documents on the Nicaraguan Resistance: Leaders, Military Personnel, and Program," Special Report No. 142 (U.S. State Department, March, 1986), 6.

[88] See, Isaac Dookhan's, The United States in the Caribbean (London: Collins Caribbean, 1985), 91-93.

[89] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Report-Senate (March, 1986), S3038.

Other architects of the Légion included a number of high profile Guardsmen, including Major Ricardo "Chino" Lau. The Senate report stated that under Somoza, Lau "arranged for hundreds of political arrests and at times supervised or approved clandestine torture and execution." As well, during the Revolution to depose Somoza, Lau commanded "a massacre of civilians in a church in Jinotepe."[91] In Chapter III, it was pointed out that he also was accused of murdering El Salvador's Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980 while the Archbishop was celebrating mass.[92] According to William Robinson and Kent Norsworthy, Lau was paid 120,000 dollars by "the Salvadoran fascist Roberto D'Aubuisson."[93] The authors also noted that Lau's involvement was confirmed on March 21, 1981 when a Salvadoran intelligence officer provided documentation and receipts which had been found on Roberto d'Abuisson. Despite this association, D'Aubuisson later became president of El Salvador's National Assembly.[94]

---

[90] Dillon, Commandos, 65.

[91] ACFPC, "Who Are the Contras?," in Congressional Record-House (April, 1985), H2336-H2337; and ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate (April, 1986), S3029.

[92] ACFPC, "Who Are the Contras?," in Congressional Record-House (April, 1985), H2337; and ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate (March, 1986), S3029.

[93] Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 44.

[94] Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 365n15; Dickey, With the Contras, 87-88.

This connection between El Salvador's deathsquads and Lau is important because the State Department in its 1986 correspondence with Congressional oversight committees claimed Lau "resigned" from the FDN. However, *Contras*, including former FDN civilian leader Edgar Chamorro, stated that Lau was the last man Bermúdez talked to at night and the first man in the morning. He also remained active in deathsquads in El Salvador and Honduras.[95] In any event, prior to becoming President of El Salvador's National Assembly, D'Aubuisson had been active in El Salvador's deathsquads. He, and some of his aides were captured in May 1980, and they had on them receipts, records of payments to support their activities, organizational diagrams, and an assortment of weapons.[96] In D'Aubuisson's personal diary were various entries of interest, but the two for March 27, 1980 (three days after Archbishop Romero's assassination), were particularly telling. The first entry concerned a meeting in Room 305 of the Hotel El Dorado America in Guatemala City, with a very wealthy and perhaps the most radical right-wing Salvadoran, Orlando De Sola. The second entry on the same day was that of another wealthy and right-wing Salvadoran, Juan Wright. Accompanying these names were the first entry: "Contributions to Nicaraguans $40,000"; and the second entry read: "Contributions to

---

[95] Dillon, Commandos, 100-101, 131, 140-142.

[96] Dickey, With the Contras, 87-88.

Nica-$80,000."[97] These notes were recorded as payments for Archbishop Romero's assassination. The entry of the Nicaraguan whose men were called upon to fulfill the contract read: "Col. Ricardo Lao tel. 67-475."[98]

Col. Lau has been variously described as "Somoza['s] hatchet man" and "a torturer."[99] At "Detachment 101" in Guatemala, Nicaraguan exiles who were members of the Légion underwent military training for various unspecified military tasks. In the interim and even after the *Contra*/revolution intensified, these men were called on for "special operations" including "robberies and kidnappings, threats and extortions. There were murders."[100] The orders at Detachment 101 were given by Col. Lau. In a somewhat stereotypical manner, the men there called Col. Lau "El Chino." According to one exile, "[H]e's very cold. Let's say he was very oriental. He didn't laugh, and only with difficulty would you make him smile. He was a serious type. Serious serious...with a look that made you afraid. A real cold oriental."[101] This characterization negatively, and falsely, stereotyped all Asians. However, it suggests that Lau was a dangerous man.

---

[97] Dickey, With the Contras, 88.

[98] Dickey, With the Contras, 88.

[99] Dickey, With the Contras, 83.

[100] Dickey, With the Contras, 82; and Dillon, Commandos, 100-101; 140-142.

[101] Dickey, With the Contras, 83.

The Légion also included Captain Justiciano "Pino" Pérez who had commanded the National Guard training centre, the *Escuela de Entrenamiento Basico* (EEBI), which had been modelled along the lines of the United States Special Forces. The EEBI had been headed by Somoza's son, Major Anastasio "Tacho III" Somoza Portocarrero, who had been born in the United States in 1951 and was educated at Harvard University.[102] Upon returning to Nicaragua, "Tacho III" enlisted in the Guards and rose rapidly through the ranks; he was commissioned as a Major in 1977 and began directing the EEBI with the assistance of Pérez. Another founding member was Captain Armando "El Policía" López who, under Somoza, commanded the units of Managua's police officers, a branch of the National Guard. These forces engaged in harrassment and widespread arrest of political opponents. By "the late 1970s, international human rights organizations reported substantial numbers of tortures and assassinations by the Managua police," headed by López.[103] The other founder, Captain Juan Gómez, had been the personal pilot of the dictator, and later became Bermúdez' pilot.[104] A 1982 United States Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report specifically referred to these prominent

---

[102] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 55.

[103] ACFPC, "Who Are the Contras?," in Congressional Record-House (March, 1985), H2337; and ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate (April, 1986), S3029.

[104] ACFPC, "Who Are the Contras?," in Congressional Record-House (April, 1985), H2337.

Contra architects as the "Somocista group."[105]

There was a splinter group of Legiónnaires which went by the same name; it included Capt. Pérez and Col. Rivera.[106] This group continued the original sabotage activities within Nicaragua as well as more spectacular acts of indiscriminate terrorism well into 1982. According to the 1982 DIA report, this group was directly responsible for "bombing a Nicaraguan civilian airliner in Mexico City, hijacking a Costa Rican civilian airliner in San José and sending a suit case bomb on a Honduran civilian airliner," which eventually exploded at a civilian terminal at *Aeropuerto Sandino* in Managua.[107] After disbanding the splinter group of Legiónnaires in 1982, Pérez and Rivera joined the FDN full time. Pérez became Bermúdez's liaison with the primarily Miskitos-*Contra* group, *Misura* (Miskitos, Sumus and Ramas), the nature of which which will be discussed in Chapter V.

Over time, these armed forces comprised of *Somocistas* and former *Sandinistas* and/or their revolutionary collaborators, were variously referred to as: freedom fighters, rebels, principals in a civil war, mercenaries, terrorists, counterrevolutionaries, and as the Nicaraguan Resistance, and the anti-*Sandinistas*, among other names. The most frequently used name was the *Contras* although this name implied greater homogeneity and unity than actually existed. It was the ideology of being *contra* or "against" the *Sandinistas* which gave the armed forces an appearance of unity. In actuality, the groups were internally divided along political-ideological lines which will become clearer in the pages to come.

---

[105] Congressional Record-Senate (1986), S3029.

[106] Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 44.

[107] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate (March, 1986), S3030.

The existence of these groups, and the CIA connection, makes it necessary to specify more clearly the origin of the *Contras* and how and why the Reagan Administration became involved. A useful starting place is the media, and the reports on covert activities being developed by the Reagan Administration for Central America and the Caribbean.

IV.4. Reagan, the Media and the *Contras*

Widespread public reports on the not so secret United States "secret war" in Nicaragua, although at first disparate, burgeoned during the early period of Reagan's presidency. At the outset, the media was one of the primary sources of information. However, unlike Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of Watergate fame, many United States reporters seemed timid about completely unmasking the veil of secrecy that permitted the war against Nicaragua for a decade. Few rigourous media challenges were made to the known disinformation disseminated by the Reagan Administration, partly because it was enjoying historic popularity at that time, partly because as Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky carefully articulated in Manufacturing Consent, the media was part of corporate America, integral to the power of the ruling elite and, in fact, were among the ruling elite such that it was rare, if ever, that elite/media dissented on major foreign policy actions.[108]

1981-1982

Despite the generally effective propaganda campaign deployed by the Reagan Administration, some probing media reporting did occur. These reports are useful for conceptualizing both how the United States came to support the *Contras* and also how the United States' citizens acquired knowledge about the exact nature of the activities that were being conducted. According to Maureen Bunyan, the press reports indicating United States possible involvement in *Contra* funding can be traced to as early as June, 1981.[109] This was five months after Reagan had been sworn in as president but a full six months before he signed a National Intelligence Finding formally authorizing any action. The actual directive had been issued by Reagan in March 1981, two months after taking office, on the pretext that the national interest compelled the United States to stop the *Sandinista* shipment of arms to the guerrillas in El Salvador.[110] The Finding was not dated until December 1, 1981, and it authorized 19.5 million dollars in lethal assistance to the CIA for the anti-*Sandinista* or *Contra* efforts.

---

[108] Herman and Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media (New York: Pantheon, 1988).

[109] This section uses the media chronology documented by Washington television broadcaster Maureen Bunyan. See Campaign for Political Rights, Transcript of U.S. Covert operations against Nicaragua; a public forum, May 27, 1982 (Washington, D.C.: Campaign for Political Rights and American Civil Liberties Union, 1982), 11.

The Reagan Finding gave the CIA broad powers to conduct a range of paramilitary operations ostensibly against Cuban supply lines inside Nicaragua. The broadness of the Finding was such as to raise the concerns of Congress about the true nature of CIA involvement.[111]

The money, administered through the CIA, was to train and supply a 500-man para-military force, in conjuction with Argentina, then under a military junta led by President Leopoldo Galtieri. At this time, Argentina was reliable for its anti-communist posture. Galtieri resigned after the *Malvinas* or Falkland War (April 2-June 14, 1982)[112] and was replaced after the 1983 elections by Raul Alfonsín's Radical Civic Union. Combined with this, military aggression was "economic warfare." Four specific maneuvers stand out.

First, between 1979 and 1980, an 8.9 million dollars Import-Export Bank credit initially granted to the Somoza dictatorship, was reduced to 40,000 dollars after the *Sandinistas* came to power. Further, the Bank immediately suspended its financing of Nicaraguan imports; this suspension seriously affected Nicaragua's ability to purchase spare parts.[113] Second, in February 1981, one month after Reagan was sworn in as president, the State Department released a "White Paper" which claimed Nicaragua was a conduit for arms trafficking to El Salvador's FMLN. This was critically analyzed in Chapter III. Of note at this point, is the suspension of the 15 million dollars credit which was part of the 75 million allocated under Carter. Third, it was disclosed by Parade magazine in March 1981 that the ex-Guardsmen were being trained in the United States for counterrevolutionary activities against the *Sandinistas.* In addition, the Reagan Administration suspended a 10 million dollar credit which had been granted to purchase wheat as part of the PL-480 program. Fourth, the following month, the United States suspended all its bilateral assistance to Nicaragua, including a 11.4 million dollars credit for rural development, education and health care programs. In effect, less visible forms of warfare were already underway long before media reports started circulating about the *Contras.* Further, criticisms of the latter were constrained by Administration propaganda which claimed, without substantiation, that in June 1981, Nicaragua had received Soviet tanks.

---

[110] The Washington Post (February 14, 1982); and Matthews, "The CIA's War," 20.

[111] William LeoGrande, "The United States and Nicaragua," in Nicaragua: The First Five Years, ed., Thomas W. Walker (New York: Praeger, 1985), 432; Woodward, Veil, 173.

[112] Las Islas Malvinas is the Spanish name for the disputed group of islands off the Argentinian coast. The British call the islands the Falklands.

---

[113] This chronology draws upon U.S. Out of Central America (USOCA) "A Chronology of U.S. Efforts to Overthrow the Nicaraguan Government," in Contemporary Marxism, Nicaragua Under Seige, 8 (Spring, 1984), 19-26; and W.I. Robinson and K. Norsworthy, "Nicaragua: The Strategy of Counterrevolution," Monthly Review 37, 7 (December, 1985), 11-24.

The media reports of these events started with a New Republic article by Nick Kotz and Morton Kondracke on June 20, 1981. The article reported that the Reagan Administration was considering a Bay of Pigs-style para-military operation against Nicaragua's Government for Reconstruction. The presentation in support of the *Contras*, referred to in the New Republic, had been made by Thomas O. Enders, the Assistant Secretary for Latin America.[114] The report claimed that the Administration had been pondering covert support from as early as February 1981. As mentioned above, this was only one month after Reagan had become president. In retrospect, the Reagan Administration's position should not have been surprising given the Republican Party's Platform of 1980. The Platform clearly indicated the Reagan campaign's refusal to accept the *Sandinistas'* triumph from the beginning with its differentiation between the government and the people of Nicaragua; the Republicans ostensibly supported the "people of Nicaragua," not their government.[115] In effect, even before coming to power, the Reagan Administration was deploying gray propaganda. Moreover, when the Republicans came to power, the *Contras* were lauded as the "true" representatives of the Nicaraguan people.

Evidently, when Enders presented at the meeting, it was after discussions with key foreign policy and intelligence officials including Secretary of State Alexander Haig and CIA Latin American division chief Duane "Dewey" Clarridge. Haig, a staunch anti-communist, was opposed to Cuba's Fidel Castro. He wanted a naval blockade of Cuba. In his view, Castro was the cause of contemporary Central American problems. Here, it is worth noting that Haig pointed to an external state (other than the United States) as the cause of Central American problems. This contradicts the fact that much of Central America's violence, whether in the form of *coup d'etats*, revolutions, insurrections, strikes, and the like, is home grown, if exacerbated by external interferences. Moreover, it is not clear that Cuba's influence in Latin America, under Castro (since the 1960s), was any greater except in a symbolic way than say that of the United States which included over one hundred years of interventions. It is also worth noting that when the Latin American people did rebel, such as against Batista in Cuba, Somoza in Nicaragua, Galtieri in Argentina and Pinochet in Chile, it was against United States-supported regimes. Haig's opposition to Cuba's "external" influence made sense only if yet another contradiction is accepted: that the United States' "external" influence was "good" or "friendly" and that Cuba's was "bad" or that of the "enemy." Cuba's enemy status was constructed by Haig; it was constitutive of United States ideology in the post-1945 period. Haig's assertion was backed by the material power of the United States.

---

[114] Woodward, Veil, 171-174.

[115] "The Republic Party Platform" (68-69) in Leiken and Rubin, The Central American Crisis Reader, 515-516.

Haig's opposition to Castro was absolute. He was especially opposed to Cuba's support for revolutionary guerrilla movements and short of a blockade, he wanted an expanded covert action program preferably designed to "piggyback" some other operation, analogous to the French operation in Chad.[116] Ultimately, a blockade raised the spectre of the Cuban Missile blockade of 1962 and it was opposed by Casey, the President's Counselor Edwin Meese III, the Chief of Staff James A. Baker III and Deputy Chief of Staff Michael K. Deaver. Clarridge thought the Argentinian military intelligence (G-2) should be used. He was particularly impressed with their anti-communist program ruthlessly developed to counter the *Montonero* guerrillas; the latter were opposed to the repressive Argentinian military junta. In the end, while Haig did express some doubts during the meeting about the particular path selected, he did not oppose Reagan's agreement to adopt, in principle, covert activities.

On December 14, 1981, William Beecher provided some public substantiation for the New Republic's report. Writing for the Boston Globe, Beecher suggested that the Administration's decision was to "press covert action in Nicaragua and El Salvador" and to "infiltrate hostile elements into these countries." The actions in Nicaragua were directed at its government, whereas in El Salvador, it was against the FMLN guerrillas. It was during this period of time that the Reagan Administration seriously began to entertain the idea of soliciting the covert assistance of various Latin American countries.

---

[116] Woodward, Veil, 117.

There were at least four major events which these reports ignored; obscured or distorted. First, in August 1981, Honduras granted the United States the right to construct a military base in the Gulf of Fonseca; it is a body of water stretching from El Salvador to Nicaragua.[117] Second, between September and October 1981, the United States and Honduras held joint military maneuvers off the Nicaraguan Coast. Thus, the intimidation was being conducted on several fronts: ideological, economic and military. Third, the following month, Secretary of State Haig spoke before Congress. He claimed Nicaragua was a threat to its neighbours and further, insinuated that military action might be launched against Nicaragua (obscuring the fact that they already were being conducted). In fact, Honduran forces attacked the Nicaraguan border post at Guasaule in order to provoke a military confrontation and provide a pretext for United States direct intervention. Finally, in December 1981 three major events occurred. On the economic front, the United States Representative in the InterAmerican Development Bank vetoed a proposal for one-half million dollars to construct agricultural cooperatives in Nicaragua; second, a (Legiónnaires-planted) bomb exploded on an Aeronica plane; and third, Reagan authorized 19.5 million dollars for the CIA to conduct paramilitary activities against Nicaragua.[118]

---

[117] USOCA, "A Chronology of U.S. Efforts," 20.

[118] Magda Henríquiz, "Economic Aggression: A Policy of State Terrorism," in On Trial, ed. Dixon, 50-60.

It was clear from the foreign policymakers' strategizing with the CIA that various proposals to remove the *Sandinistas* were being developed and that one of these CIA proposals included the plan to use "friendly" Central and Latin American countries such as Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. From the very beginning, the Guatemalan Army, with the support of Guatemala's military dictatorship under General Romeo Lucas García, played a role in building up the *Contras*, including some financial assistance. In addition to the United States' "persuasion," as Shultz described it, there were several reasons for Guatemala's involvement; three stand out as most instrumental. First, a revolutionary regime in Managua was clearly an inspiration to Guatemala's own revolutionary forces, the Guatemala's National Revolutionary Unity. In the same way that Cuba's successfully executed revolution gave inspiration to countless revolutionaries in Latin America and worldwide, so too could a successful revolution in Nicaragua. Second, assisting the *Contras* allowed Guatemala to capitalize upon United States' military and economic aid by characterizing its own internal conflicts as a struggle against communism (that is, by preying upon the United States' fear of "another Cuba"). Finally, the Carter Administration had terminated aid to Guatemala for human rights violations, and under Reagan, this aid was restored on the pretext that it was essential for combatting communism. Thus, it was in Guatemala's military and economic self-interests to assist the *Contras*; it translated into an economically and rhetorically favourable stance by the Reagan Administration towards Guatemala. In Reagan's mind, nothing could be worse than Nicaragua, except perhaps Cuba and the Soviet Union. Guatemala's domestic condition and its need for United States aid combined with the *Contras'* and the Reagan Administration's need for sanctuary made the prospect of collaboration virtually guaranteed.

Guatemalan territory was instrumental as the site of armed training. Those Guardsmen who were recruited by Bermúdez, Sanchez and Lau, underwent practical as well as theoretical military training at two locations: the Aurora Airport and a safe house in Guatemala City's D-zone. After training, the recruits were usually transferred to a small Guatemalan village called Esquipulas which was located on the border with Honduras.[119] At this point there were only about 40 men who were being prepared by these senior Guardsmen, in conjunction with the CIA, for some form of military action in opposition to the changes which had occurred within Nicaragua. As of yet, the full spectrum of actions beyond terrorist attacks were unknown and their ultimate purpose was unclear or at least unstated. In addition, there was more training in Honduras. Of these men, some were selected for further training in Argentina. This training, along with passports and visas, was supervised by Col. Lau.[120] The men who were chosen to train in Argentina, including those recruited by Frenica, already were or became members of the Legión at the end of the training.[121]

---

[119] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 45.

[120] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 45.

It was noted earlier that Argentina at the time of Somoza's defeat was under the military government of Gen. Galtieri. I have argued that the involvement of Argentina was not by chance given the admiration of policymakers within the Reagan Administration's for the military junta's counterinsurgency successes against the *Montonero* guerrillas. The idea to use the Argentinians originated out of the CIA and was discussed during various meetings of Reagan's NSC Planning Group. However, in Chapter III, it was pointed out that Argentina had been solicited in order to organize and direct the *Contras* since as early as 1979; this was a means of avoiding direct United States involvement.[122] The formal establishment of the 1979 military alliance was after a direct outcome of meetings between United States and Latin American defense chiefs.[123] This meant that counterrevolutionary networks were being established before power actually had been transferred from Carter to Reagan. It also meant that Casey's discussions about involving the Argentinians during the NSC Planning Group meetings were primarily to legitimize activities that already had been initiated by the CIA. Although the Argentinians proved instrumental between 1979 and 1981 in deflecting attention from United States involvement, by 1981 the CIA was in direct charge. Some individual Argentinian contributions continued.[124]

---

[121] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 57.

[122] The Miami Herald (September 9, 1984); and Intercontinental Press, 24, 11 (June 2, 1986).

[123] Matthews, "Franchising Aggression," 35.

After the *Malvinas* War, United States-Argentinian relations cooled, compelling the CIA to assume even greater control. By 1983, there were some "150 CIA officials and 50-60 Spanish-speaking military personnel [who] maintained contact with the Contras."[125] Further, during congressional hearings, the CIA admitted to having "assumed day-to-day control of counterrevolutionary activities, including pinpointing targets, plotting attacks and conferring with rebel field leaders."[126] The extent of this was illuminated by former *Contra* leader Edgar Chamorro who claimed at the World Court that, "as long as I was in Honduras [until June 1984] the FDN never acquired its own arms, ammunition or other military equipment."[127] Thus, prior to 1981 the Argentinians, upon the direct request of the United States, directed the training operations in Argentina, Honduras, and to a lesser extent, Costa Rica. After 1982, some 35 agents remained with the *Contras*, essentially as mercenaries since their "official" status had changed.[128]

---

[124] Matthews, "The CIA's War," 23.

[125] In These Times (May 4-10, 1983); and Matthews, "The CIA's War," 23.

[126] In These Times (May 4-10, 1983); and Matthews, "The CIA's War," 23.

[127] Matthews, "The CIA's War," 23.

After winning the Argentinian elections, Raul Alfonsín's government estimated that, in addition to personnel, more than ten million dollars in military aid, including firearms, ammunition and other equipment, had been transferred to the *Contras* between 1979 and 1984.[129] The delivery of this military aid, which resulted from the meeting of defense chiefs, actually continued well into 1984.[130] Additionally, after that meeting, training centres were built in Honduras and Costa Rica by the Argentinians for the *Contras*. The Argentinians worked in a close liaison with the Honduran Army. The two men instrumental in this early stage were "Shaw," who was then the CIA station chief in Honduras, and an Argentinian advisor named Hector Frances.[131] Frances left the *Contras* in October 1982 but he described the collaboration between the Honduran Army and the Argentinians as more central than the command structure which was then being established for the *Contras*. According to Frances, "[W]ith the permanent vigilance and the permanent orientation of the CIA, expressing the orders of the State Department, these interrelated general staffs dominate the

---

[128] Dickey, With the Contras, 156; The New York Time (April 8, 1983); The Miami Herald (October 26, 1982).

[129] Matthews, "Franchising Aggression," 36; Alfonso Chardy, The Miami Herald (March 25, 1982).

[130] The Miami Herald (September 9, 1984); Intercontinental Press 24, 11 (June 2, 1986).

[131] Matthews, "Franchising Aggression," 35.

Nicaraguan [*Contra*] staff."[132] Overall power resided in the State Department and the CIA, which were supported by the Argentinians. The Hondurans and Nicaraguan *Contras* followed American orders. Moreover, after the movements away from the Argentinians and, to a lesser extent Israeli management, the CIA put greater efforts into creating a united opposition. This was mostly a "front."

Cultivating The United "Front"

At the end of 1980 and into 1981, another group of anti-*Sandinistas* began to evolve. At that time, efforts were underway to try and infuse "democratic elements" into the various *Contra* groups. One of the places the CIA looked was to disgruntled *Sandinistas* who were unhappy with their lot in the post-triumph period. A second place was among the more conservative groups which had opposed Somoza. One of the first recruits was Adolfo Calero. The 1953 Notre Dame-graduate Adolfo Calero was a businessman and the manager of Coca-Cola of Nicaragua. He was also a prominent leader in Nicaragua's Conservative Party and had been jailed for participating in a businessman strike against Somoza. Senator Harkin described

---

[132] Frances cited in Matthews, "Sowing the Dragon's Teeth: The U.S. War Against Nicaragua," NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August 1986), 35.

Calero as "a Ferdinand Marcos before his time."[133] He suggested that Calero's opposition to Somoza was not "because of the dictator's political and human rights abuses." Rather, Calero had opposed Somoza "because Somoza had taken some of his money. He wanted to get rid of Somoza so he could go in there and take other people's money."[134] Although Calero did not officially join the *Contras* until the formation of the FDN, Edgar Chamorro argued that while in Nicaragua, Calero acted as a conduit for CIA funds to student groups and labour organizations.[135]

Tony Feldman, the CIA agent who headed the Agency Central American Task Force and who was responsible for recruiting FDN leaders, persuaded Calero to join the forces in Honduras. He became the "President of the National Directorate and Commander-in-Chief of the FDN Armed Forces," a position which was to cause resentment from the other *Contras* who believed he had not paid his dues.[136] Further, Calero demanded and received a greater renumeration than the others because he claimed he had left a lucrative business in Nicaragua. Of the "civilian" heads of the *Contra* forces which were to be put forth for Congressional approval, Calero was the most powerful and enjoyed tremendous support from the United States far-

---

[133] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate (March, 1986), 3029.

[134] Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 68.

[135] Dillon, Commandos, 105.

[136] Dillon, Commandos, 105.

Right and was quite successful at fund-raising for the *Contras*.[137] Although he started at over $2,000 per month tax-free, this was later increased in the neighbourhood of one million dollars a month from the Saudis.[138] Calero was the brother-in-law of Arístides Sanchez who helped founded the Legion.

Another *Contra* leader, Alfonso Robelo, was recruited from the Government for Reconstruction after the National Directorate, made up exclusively of *Sandinistas*, had been announced. The Directorate included nine "Commanders of the Revolution," namely: Daniel Ortega, Humberto Ortega, Victor Tirado, Luís Carrión, Carlos Núñez, Jaime Wheelock, Baryardo Arce, Tomas Borge, and Henry Ruíz. Further, one month later, on October 22, the Government for Reconstruction postponed convening the Council of State until it could be restructured to incorporate representation of peasants and workers.[139] The following year, Alfonso Robelo visited Washington, D.C. and, perhaps coincidentally upon his return, he relaunched the predominantly middle-class Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) on March 16, 1980. The MDN was a small party which had been formed in the late 1970s in opposition to Somoza. It was usually described by the Reagan Administration as social democratic; however it was closer to social Christian. Robelo, a chemical engineer, was also a wealthy

---

[137] Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 67.

[138] Dillon, Commandos, 103-104, 164.

[139] Marcus, Nicaragua, xiii.

Coca-Cola franchise owner, a cotton grower and the producer of a cooking oil used in virtually every Nicaraguan home.[140] Ironically, when Robelo became a member of the government, in his enthusiasm he had claimed that the future of Nicaragua was with socialism.[141] On April 21, the Government formally announced that peasants and workers would constitute the majority representation in the Council of State. The following day, Alfonso Robelo resigned; the reality of the redistribution of power was more than he was prepared to accept. In his announcement he claimed that both his resignation, and the earlier resignation of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, were acts of political protest. One year later, in April 1983, Robelo was commanding ARDE forces with Pastora from along the Costa Rican border and, like Cruz, he was placed on the payroll of the CIA.[142] Thus, like Cruz', the revolutionary tenure of both Barrios de Chamorro and Robelo was short-lived.

Other "democratic" alternatives came to include the brothers Edmundo and Fernando Chamorro Rappaccioli, who had been active in the struggle against Somoza. They had worked with *Sandinista Commandante* Eden Pastora Gómez on the "Southern Front," along the Costa Rican border. They were part of the "September 11th" movement which had included Emmett Lang, Oscar Pérez Cassar and William Baltodano. The September 11th had launched several successful attacks against Somoza's bunker, the National Guard and the elite EEBI forces.[143] Although they collaborated with the *Sandinistas*, leadership styles and political differences with Edén Pastora eventually led to a split. Both Pastora and Fernando Chamorro have been described as "individualistic" and "egotistical."[144] In December 1979, Fernando Chamorro returned to Nicaragua from Costa Rica and briefly worked with the Government for Reconstruction. However, disagreements resulted in his departure in April 1981. He left Nicaragua along with Juan Zavala. Edmundo Chamorro had remained in Costa Rica after the triumph and already had been contemplating armed opposition to the *Sandinistas*. Within several months of Fernando Chamorro's move to Costa Rica, they had formed the *Union Democratica Nicaraguense-Fuerza Armada Revolucionario* (UDN-FARN).[145] The general directorate and administrative staff were headed by Edmundo; Fernando took charge of the military command; Zavala was second-in-command and William Baltodano, third.

---

[140] Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 67.

[141] Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 67.

[142] Marcus, Nicaragua, xiv-xvii; Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 67.

Baltodano claimed he had joined the armed opposition to his former comrades because he was piqued after returning from Costa Rica in December 1979 and "all the doors remained closed to me. That hurt me personally. I believed that the decision to take up arms against my former comrades was already lurking in my subconscious."[146] Vincente Chamorro Rappaccioli had encouraged him to join the armed opposition abroad and, he did. In retrospect, Baltodano claimed that "the counterrevolution took advantage of my bad situation."[147] In about August 1981, the group started receiving support from the Argentinians and, in fact, they had met directly with the Argentinian Chief of State, General Balín. From the Argentinians, they had received an immediate disbursement of 50,000 dollars. From Venezuela, they received medical supplies and the promise of future assistance which was funnelled through the Argentinian and Venezuelan embassies in San José, Costa Rica.[148] As well, they received covert funds from Israel.[149] FARN's first military camp was built on the hacienda, *El Pescador*, owned by a Cuban exile in Honduras.[150] There, about 50 to 60 men underwent military and ideological training.

---

[143] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 16-17.

[144] Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 66.

[145] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 21.

The UDN-FARN and ARDE developed somewhat separately from the *Somocistas*, except their money and weapon supplies came from the same sources. In the early days when there were efforts undertaken to improve the Legion's image, UDN-FARN and ARDE enjoyed favoured status with the Honduran military. However, when the CIA took direct charge after the Argentinian exit, UDN-FARN and ARDE were replaced by the Legión and ultimately, the FDN. Neither the Chamorros nor ARDE wanted to openly collaborate with the *Somocistas*. In contrast, over time, "the Honduran army had a great interest in supporting its old comrades from the National Guard. And so the Honduran military withdrew its support from Chamorro and gave it to the Legion."[151] Nevertheless, each group received CIA assistance. Arms were officially purchased by the Honduran Army in Miami, facilitated and shipped by the Honduran consulate, and distributed to the *Contras* in Tegucigalpa.[152]

---

[146] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 19.

[147] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 19.

[148] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 22-23.

[149] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 145-168.

[150] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 24.

Perhaps one of the biggest "name draws" was that of the former *Sandinista* Edén Pastora Gómez. In April 1982, several non-*Somocista* *Contra* factions, including Pastora's *Frente Revolucionaria Sandinista* (FRS), joined together to form ARDE under the command of Pastora. Who was this *Sandinista* hero turned *Contra* and why did he accuse his revolutionary comrades of betraying the Revolution? Did Pastora truly believe this and, if not, why was he making such inflammatory charges? This case, minimally, requires a broader context. Pastora was the son of a

---

[151] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 24.

[152] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 25.

Conservative party leader. When he was seven years old, his father was assassinated by the Guards after a land dispute with Somoza.[153] Later, backed by the Conservative opposition. Pastora engaged in several "poorly planned and ill-fated adventures" which he had hoped would force Somoza from power. His efforts were directed at removing Somoza and replacing him with a Conservative.

In 1970, Daniel Ortega approached Pastora and recruited him to become a *Sandinista* guerrilla.[154] Pastora's tenure with the *Sandinistas* was short; he left the mountains, doubting a forseeable victory by the guerrillas. However, in late 1977, the *Sandinistas'* ground work started to bear fruit as they upped the tempo of their assault on the Guards. It was at this point that Pastora initiated contact with the *Sandinistas*, which was itself divided into three tendencies, including the already mentioned *Terceristas*.[155] In August, 1978 German Pomares, one of the founders of the *Frente Sandinista*, fell ill. At that time the *Sandinistas* had been planning a daring attack on the National Palace, to be led by Pomares. According to Humberto Ortega, then the principal national military strategist for the *Sandinistas*, they wanted to demonstrate their "confidence" in Pastora and additionally, provide "a stimulus for Pastora in our efforts to cultivate in him a revolutionary attitude."[156] Thus Pastora, known as *Commandante Cero*, was selected to lead what was to become a famous assault. The assault on the National Palace was successful, and Pastora, the only guerrilla to remove his mask, skyrocketed to national and international fame. While the CIA and other Somoza-backers within the United States such as Jeane Kirkpatrick thought Somoza's concessions to the guerrillas -- one-half million dollars and a plane to Costa Rica -- were unwarranted, later the CIA did not miss the opportunity to cultivate a relationship with Pastora.[157]

---

[153] Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 66.

[154] Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 66.

[155] The other two included: the Prolonged Popular War and the Proletarians. By 1978 the three tendencies were collaborating in a more concerted way. See Humberto Ortega, "La lucha ideologica y el Caso Pastora," May Day, 1982 speech to workers in Managua.

After the *Sandinista* triumph, Pastora became Vice-minister of Defense to Defense Minister Humberto Ortega. Eleven months later, he wrote a note to Ortega claiming, "I'm going to the trenches where the duty of an internationalist combatant leads me...I'm going after the smell of gunpowder."[158] This came in the wake of the assassination of El Salvador's Archbishop Oscar Romero, and the heightened armed struggle being waged by Guatemala's National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). Pastora headed to Guatemala, perhaps envisioning himself as the contemporary Ernesto "Che" Guevara. However, Pastora was rejected by the Guatemalan revolutionaries because of his "immaturity, political and ideological inconsistencies, and his permanent lack of revolutionary commitment."[159]

---

[156] **Humberto Ortega, "La lucha ideológica y el Caso Pastora," May Day 1982 Speech to workers in Managua, Nicaragua.**

[157] **Shirley Christian, Revolution in the Family (New York: Random House, 1985), 88.**

[158] **Roberto Bardini, Eden Pastora: Un Cero en la Historia (Mexico City: Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, 1984), 43; Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 366, note 54.**

Pastora disappeared for a while. In May 1982 Pastora had a secret meeting with one "Dewey Maroni," alias used by Duane Clarridge, CIA Director of Operations for Latin America.[160] Given Pastora's public appeal, the CIA thought he would be useful for improving the image of the counterrevolutionary opposition. Pastora was reluctant to collaborate publicly with either the CIA or the other counterrevolutionary groups dominated by the *Somocistas*. However, he did agree to become involved with two conditions. First, Pastora wanted to command his own forces. Second, and perhaps most important, he wanted "absolute deniability."[161] Pastora wanted to capitalize on the opportunity to again command guerrilla forces but not if it was going to cost him his popularity. The CIA, as well as foreign policy personnel within the Reagan Administration, also recognized the centrality of Pastora's image to the armed opposition and, for the movement, was satisfied not to jeopardize that image. Thus, unlike the other *Contra* groups, Pastora's connections with, and support from the CIA, were not widely known. In fact, even within the Reagan Administration, only about five people had access to this knowledge, as opposed to the usual thirty that were informed on covert operations.[162] These foreign policy personnel developed an elaborate network of international weapons dealers and secret accounts to launder funds to Pastora.

---

[159] Bardini, Eden Pastora, 86; Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 67.

[160] Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 67.

[161] Robinson and Norsworthy, David and Goliath, 67-68.

Publicly Pastora denounced *Somocistas* and refused to work with the former Guardsmen. However, like the Guardsmen, almost all of his money and weapons came from the United States.[163] Further, many anti-*Sandinistas* saw him as a hypocrite. This position was expressed by Pedro Espinoza Sanchez, a *Contra* who had been recruited by Clemen Anaica, wife of a former colonel in the National Guard. Espinoza Sanchez claimed that "he [Pastora] has two faces. What he publicly tells the press or radio is pretty far removed from what he really thinks."[164] Espinoza Sanchez became familiar with Pastora through the FDN, to which he was recruited to work on the "Internal Front" at a salary of 10,000 córdobas (over twice as much as he was making at a hacienda in Nicaragua).[165] Thus, later efforts were geared toward unifying the disparate groups. On July 24, 1982 ARDE sealed its alliance with the FDN in Panama. In 1983 ARDE commenced discussions with Fagoth's Misura which was then operating in northern Nicaragua. Not long thereafter, ARDE and

---

[162] Los Angeles Times, (3 March, 1985).

[163] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 152.

[164] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 152.

[165] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 152.

Misura began joint military coordinations. Misurasata, another indigenous-*Contra* group led by Brooklyn Rivera, also was working with Pastora.[166]

Eventually, there were seven or eight armed groups which came to comprise the *Contras* after Frenica and the Légion. These seven included: (1) the *Frente Democratica Nicaraguense* (FDN) led by Strategic Commander, Colonel Enrique Bermúdez Varela; (2) *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Nicaraguenses* (FARN) led by Fernando Chamorro Rappaccioli; (3) *El Movimiento Democratica Nicaraguense* (MDN) led by Alfonso Robelo Callejas; (4) *Alianza Revolucionaria Democratica* (ARDE) led by former *Sandinista* Edén Pastora; (5) *El Bloque Oposición al Sur* (BOS) in Costa Rica founded by another former *Sandinista* Alfredo César Aquirre, and a number of paramilitary and private citizens aid groups based within the United States. Under the CIA management, they were compelled to present a united front, namely the FDN, followed by UNO.

The years 1981 and 1982 were pivotal points in the assembling of what was to become known as the *Contra* forces. The FDN, which incorporated the Légion, UDN-FARN, the ELN, ARDE and the primarily Miskito group Misura led by Stedman Fagoth, was "founded" in Guatemala in August 1981 under the auspices of the CIA.[167] It was initially headed by Colonel Enrique Bermúdez Varela and Adolfo Calero. Later, it was joined by Salvador Icaza as well as the Harvard-educated Edgar Chamorro Coronel. The latter came on board as director.[168] The ten principal signatories of the FDN Acta were Arístides Sanchez, José Cardenal and eight National Guardsmen including Major Ricardo Lau, Enrique Bermúdez, Juan Gómez and Francisco Rivera.[169]

---

[166] The Wall Street Journal (June 14, 1985).

[167] ACFPC, "Who Are the Contras?," in Congressional Report-House (April 23, 1985), H2337-2339; and ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," Congressional Record-Senate (March 19, 1986), S3029.

The principal recipient of United States financial aid and military assistance to the *Contras* throughout all of its reorganizations, was the FDN.[170] The FDN operated primarily out of bases in Southern Honduras. It is not coincidental that the major debates about the composition and nature of the FDN were between Congressional Caucuses and the State Department and National Security Council. These were the political bodies responsible either for its creation or preservation. In particular, there were disputes about what kind of persons made-up the FDN. As a consequence, both the State Department and the Caucus generated a number of documents on the *Contras*. Despite having public relations offices in Latin

---

[168] H. Anderson, T.M. DeFrank, R. Parry, D. Waller, D. Adams and R. Nordland, "Turning Points in the Contra War," Newsweek (March 28, 1988), 38; Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 146; J.McConnell, "How Israel came to deal with the Contras," Boston Sunday Globe (January 18, 1987).

[169] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate (March, 1986), S3030.

[170] ACFPC, "Who Are the Contras?," Congressional Record-House (1985), H2337-2339; and the State Departments, "'Who' is the Democratic Resistance?" (March, 1986).

America, the United States and Europe, the *Contras* produced little to no self-generated material. The discrepancies raised several questions: who comprised the FDN? What was the background of the forces known as the FDN? And, what kind of hostilities, armed and otherwise, were they engaged in throughout Central America?

The Strategic Commander of the FDN was Bermúdez Varela. According to the 1985 Caucus report, the FDN's structure and related personnel are delineated in Figure I.

1982-1983

In the following year, more probing articles appeared in several prominent printed media. At the time, there was no official acknowledgment of support for covert activities. On the surface, there were internationally recognized diplomatic relations; however, covert activities made a lie of this surface appearance. Tensions were heightened from the beginning of the Reagan Administration. Media reports were made in the context of deliberate government practices of disseminating lies. The ability of the public to garner some kind of reasonable conception of United States-Nicaraguan relations clearly was constrained. In the beginning, some media reports were closer to the truth than could have been known, given the government's disinformation campaigns. However, given the complex nature of events happening in so many countries, simultaneously, the complete picture was difficult to paint; some

Figure I

Military Command Structure: FDN (1985)[171]

STRATEGIC COMMANDER:
Enrique Bermúez Varela
Supreme Commander and Chief of Staff

REGIONAL COMMAND COORDINATOR:
W. "Tono" Calderón López
(Coordinated from 8,000 to 12,000 combatants)

GENERAL STAFF:
G-1, Personnel: "The Deer" [Harlie Duarte]
G-2, Intelligence: "The Bull" [Donald Torres]
G-3, Operations: "Mike Lima" [Luís Moreno]
G-4, Logistics: "The Policeman" [Armando López]
G-5, Pychological Warfare "Invisible" [Rodolfo Ernesto Ampíe]

CENTRAL COMMAND:
Air Operations: Juan Gómez
Counter-Intelligence: Ricardo Lau
Misura Liaison: Justiciano Pérez
Special Forces: "Little Bird"
Infantry Training School: (name unknown)

REGIONAL COMMANDERS:
Nicarao: Commandante Mack [José Benito Bravo Centeno]
Segovia: Commandante Dr. Aureliano
Jorge Salazar: Commandante Quiche [Juan Ramón Rivas]
Rafaela Herrera: Commandante Little Tiger [Encarnación Baldiva]
Diriangen: Commandante Dimas Tigrillo [Francisco Baldiva]
San Jacinto: Commandante Renato [Francisco Ruíz Castellon]
(directed from 500 to 2,000 combatants)

TASK FORCE COMMANDERS:
Two to eight Task Force Commanders served under
a regional command. Each directed some 250 combatants.

---

[171] Sources included: ACFPC, "Who Are the Contras?," Congressional Record-House (April 23, 1985); S. Dillon, Commandos, 321-334.

media did not try or gave it a poor effort and much went unreported or was only disjointedly reported as will be shown below.

One probing report was made by Don Oberdorfer and Patrick Tyler in the Washington Post on February 14, 1982. Oberdorfer and Tyler supported earlier reports that the Reagan Administration was, indeed, supporting covert operations against the government of Nicaragua. They wrote that in mid- November, 1981, Reagan authorized a "broad program of U.S. planning and action" in Central America, including the "encouragement of political and paramilitary operations by other governments against the Cuban presence in Nicaragua."[172] In February of 1982, the World Bank, under pressure from the Reagan Administration, both suspended its loan program and unilaterally demanded that Nicaragua commence a World Bank economic stabilization program. Additionally, wheat imports from Nicargua were reduced and, further, Nicaragua was threatened with complete suspension if it bought purebred breeding studs from Cuba. The pretext given (paternalistically), was that the Cuban studs had a disease, aphtha; the disease did not exist in Cuba as subsequent international agencies reported.[173] These hostilities in February were matched by two earlier events beginning in as early as January 1982. First, United States Undersecretary of State James Buckley sponsored meetings in San José; which included the foreign ministers of Costa

---

[172] Bunyan, Transcript of the U.S. Covert Operations against Nicaragua, 12.

[173] Henriquez, "Economic Aggression," 50.

Rica, El Salvador and Honduras. These countries formed the "Central American Democratic Community," from which Nicaragua and Panama were excluded. As well, the *Sandinistas* exposed a CIA plot to assassinate *Commandante* Leticia Herrera, Head of the Police and, also, covert plans to blow up an oil refinery and cement factory.[174]

On March 10, 1982, the Washington Post outlined one of the most specific accounts of the Reagan Administration program against the *Sandinista* government of Nicaragua. The article by Patrick Tyler and Bob Woodward, "U.S. Plans Covert Operations to Disrupt Nicaraguan Economy," reported the covert plans developed included the Administration's approval of 19 million dollars of CIA Contingency Funds to create a sophisticated paramilitary force of about 500 Latin Americans. The latter had been planned since November-December, 1981. These forces were to operate from commando camps along the Rio Coco border between Nicaragua and Honduras. Further, the commandos' objective was to destroy vital Nicaraguan targets such as power plants and bridges. The penultimate goal of these sabotage efforts was to disrupt and destabilize the Nicaraguan economy by diverting the Nicaraguan government's attention and resources toward the commandos. Ultimately, it was hoped that the diversion of government funds to war efforts would erode funds for public social expenditure, and eventually would create disatisfaction with the government.

As noted, Tyler and Woodward provided one of the more substantial reports that a proposal for covert operations had been developed by Casey for the Reagan Administration. They claimed the proposal was presented by Casey to Reagan on November 16, 1981 at a National Security Council meeting. They also suggested the CIA proposal was supported by Haig and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger. For the most part, the substance of this article was correct; Casey had presented a proposal for covert activities to the Reagan Administration's foreign policymakers and, for the most part, it was generally accepted. However, Casey's proposal, which led to the authorization of a Finding, was presented to Reagan at an informal National Security Council Planning Group (NSCPG) meeting on Tuesday, December 1.[175] The participants in the NSCPG gatherings were Reagan, Vice-President George Bush, assistants to the President including his Counselor Meese, his Chief of Staff Baker and Deputy Chief of Staff Deaver, Secretary of State Haig (later George P. Shultz), Secretary of Defense Weinberger and CIA Director Casey. These meetings sometimes included other aides. Richard Allen, then National Security Advisor, was on leave of absence. At the time, Allen was being investigated for charges that he had accepted one thousand dollars from Japanese journalists. In any event, it was at a meeting with this caliber of foreign policymakers that Casey proposed that 19 million dollars be allocated to support the Argentinians in developing a 500-man paramilitary force to oppose the

---

[174] USOCA, "A Chronology," 20.

---

[175] Woodward, Veil, 173.

Sandinistas. This was signed by Reagan as a *fait accompli* on December 1.

These latter reports implicating the Argentinians were routinely denied or deflected by the White House, primarily through the press secretary and with a kernel of truth. Technically the Post article might have been false. It was contingent upon whether Casey had presented a broad range proposal for covert activities on November 16. Yet it was true that approximately two weeks after the November 16 meeting, Reagan officially signed into law a finding authorizing covert activities against the *Sandinista* government in Nicaragua which suggests, minimally, that it was discussed at that time. Ostensibly, the covert activities were to harrass and not overthrow the *Sandinistas*, with the goal of cutting off the arms supply to the FMLN guerrillas in El Salvador. The document also outlined the need for covert intelligence operations not only in Central America, but also the Caribbean.

It remains unclear on what evidence Enders and Casey based their claim that the *Sandinistas* were supplying arms to the FMLN (or that Cuba was shipping arms via Nicaragua to the FMLN) after 1980 when the Finding was authorized. First, much later (in March 1984), Undersecretary of Defense Fred Ikle, reported that some fifty per cent of arms used by the FMLN were seized from Salvadorean military troops.[176] Second, as noted in Chapter III, efforts to verify the

---

[176] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 183-184.

Administration's claims indicate that there was mostly moral and material support from both Nicaragua and Cuba for the FMLN immediately following the *Sandinistas'* triumph (1979-1980), but thereafter material support from the *Sandinistas* was negligible. Finally, while the Administration could draw on the claim of protecting its intelligence sources, as it did, it is somewhat dubious that: (a) arms could be transported across Honduran land without detection by the Honduran or United States armed forces and intelligence agents stationed in Honduras; (b) via air or sea without Honduran or Salvadorean detection, at least once. Such a detection could have been used for its media worth, but it was never forthcoming. Of course, this was complicated by initial Honduran denials of any *Contras* on its territory.

Three days after the Tyler and Woodward report, Leslie Gelb of the New York Times (March 13, 1982), reported that during White House meetings, two policies were agreed upon. First, it was agreed that no United States support would be given to the *Somocistas*. Although not specifically addressed by Gelb, *Somocistas* presumably included the National Guard. The second agreement was that no Americans would be direct participants in the para-military operations against Nicaragua. In addition, it was reported that United States personnel assistance would include two to three Spanish-speaking CIA agents. Their portfolio included acting as the official liaison officers with the commandos, sharing intelligence, and selecting targets.

This report by Gelb was retracted the following day. The subsequent article on March 14, 1982 stated that Reagan only approved the idea for para-military commandos forces "in general." Gelb further retracted the claim about the proposed CIA role vis-a-vis other Latin American governments. Finally, the retraction included a re/clarification of the targets to be attacked; they were not specifically vital installations in Nicaragua geared at destabilizing the *Sandinista* government. Rather, the para-military operations were targeted at Cuban arms supply lines in Central America. Despite the accuracy of Gelb's first report, the claims were withdrawn and it is not exactly clear why. However, there is at least one possibility. In March, 1982, the Reagan Administration launched a public relations campaign depicting the *Sandinistas* as a major threat to its neighbours and to United States security. Further, Honduras apparently had been solicited successfully because in that month its President, General Gustavo Alvarez, openly authorized the transit of United States troops as well as the presence of at least 72 official military personnel. Moreover, the first major military assaults began in March when an estimated 110 *Contras* sabotaged bridges, warehouses and crops within Nicargua.[177] This included the Río Negro Bridge in Somotillo on March 14; the Rio Coco Bridge in Ocotal on the same day; and an electrical plant in the Department of Chinandega on April 17. In effect, Gelb's retraction was unwarranted and obscured the counterrevolutionary violence.

---

[177] Pasos, "Report on Military Aggression," 32-33.

There were other aspects of the *Contra*/revolution which were routinely under-reported in United States major media. These were the acts of intimidation, including multiple intrusions by United States spy planes into Nicaraguan airspace, the multiple naval maneuvers off Nicaraguan shores, the acts of economic aggression and, of course, the number of war casualties. Between 1980 and 1981, an estimated 2,000 Nicaraguans were murdered, captured or kidnapped by the *Contras*.[178] Further, a month after the Gelb retraction, the counterrevolutionary efforts in Honduras were being supervised by none other than the United States Ambassador to Honduras, John Negroponte.[179] Moreover, these activities contradicted Congressional hearings in September, 1982. For example, Lt. Colonel John Buchanan, United States Marine Corp (Ret.), in a brief to a House of Representative Subcommittee on the "tensions" between Nicaragua and Honduras, argued that Nicaragua's military buildup was predictable and "defensive in nature." Additionally, he claimed that the Nicaraguan military capabilities were being exaggerated by the Reagan Administration leading him to state that "[O]ne can only conclude that the Reagan administration is distorting the facts in order to justify covert operations aimed at overthrowing the

---

[178] Agencia Nueva Nicaragua, "The Defeat of the Counterrevolution: An Overview 1985-1987," (Managua, Nicaragua, April, 1987), 3-4.

[179] USOCA, "A Chronology," 21.

Sandinistas and an unprecedented military buildup in Honduras."[180]

Buchanan's comments, in effect, suggested that the multilayered hostilities were based upon fabricated claims and, hence, were indefensible. Nevertheless, private American enterprises also entered into counterrevolutionary activities. In November 1981, Standard Fruit reneged on its promise to market bananas from Nicaragua. Reagan ended the year with a trip to Latin America; he visited the three countries bordering Nicaragua.[181] This did not stop the House of Representatives from passing the Boland Amendment in a vote of 411 to none. The Amendment prohibited the use of "military equipment, military training or advice, or other support for military activities...for the purpose of overthrowing the Government of Nicaragua or provoking a military exchange between Nicaragua and Honduras.[182] Clearly, then, there were serious concerns about the saliency of the Reagan Administration's policies in Central America and, during this period, Congress was prepared to act in opposition to illegal and (morally) indefensible activities against Nicaragua. This did not stop the reactionary subversion, including efforts to build up a paramilitary force.

In July 1982, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), had issued a secret document which advised that if the counterrevolution was "to succeed eventually in overthrowing the government [it would]...depend largely on successful unification efforts, the extent of popular support received within and outside Nicaragua, and the effectiveness of the Sandinista counterinsurgency operations."[183] These claims undergirded the strategy in subsequent years.

---

[180] **Buchanan quoted in USOCA, "A Chronology," 21.**

[181] **USOCA, "A Chronology," 22.**

[182] **Boland Amendment quoted in USOCA, "A Chronology," 22.**

1983-1984

By March 1983, there were approximately 1,200 former Guardsmen organized into "Task Forces" of some 200 to 300 men.[184] Initial attacks within Nicaragua produced heavy casualties to the *Sandinista* Army as well as civilians, including a French physician studying cutaneous leishmaniasis (mountain leprosy) in March; and another 13 civilians, two nurses and a West German physician in April. The indiscriminate violence led to the West Germans in Nicaragua occupying their embassy in Managua and calling for protests to the United States government. A public opinion poll on April 29, 1983 found that two-thirds of the American public did not support the Reagan Administration. Further, a House subcommittee looking into *Contra* activities voted nine to five to prohibit covert aid and activities against Nicaragua. In contrast, the Senate voted in defense of the aid until October 1983 on the contrived grounds that it was to interdict arms trafficking to the FMLN guerrillas in El Salvador. Moreover, the Administration continued economic warfare by reducing the percentage of sugar brought from Nicaragua by 90 per cent in May. The Nicaraguan government submitted a formal complaint to the Secretariat of the General Agreement on Tarriffs and Trade (GATT) and on June 8, 1983, after arbitration, the GATT committee unanimously approved a request for the United States to resume its quota.[185] The Reagan Administration refused to comply. This resulted in another round of formal complaints, this time from the Latin American Council, the highest body of the *Sistema Económico Latinamericano* (SELA). In its response, SELA "repudiate[d] the step taken by the government of the United States of American against Nicaragua, which affects the autonomy and threatens the economic security of this member." It urged the United States to revoke the measure, to no avail.[186]

---

[183] DIA, "Insurgency Activity Increases in Nicaragua," dated July 16, 1982; published in Counterspy magazine (September/November, 1983).

[184] Eich and Rincon, The Contras; Dickey, With the Contras; and Dillon, Commandos.

Within Nicaragua, military attacks continued. Despite the West German protests in April, more attacks continued that month. In one case, a West German ferry boat donated to Nicaragua was blown up on the Río San Juan. In another case, two West Germans were killed and another kidnapped. ARDE claimed they had captured an East

---

[185] Magda Henriquez, "Economic Aggression: A Policy of State Terrorism," in On Trial: Reagan's War Against Nicaragua, ed. Marlene Dixon (San Francisco: Synthesis Publications, 1985), 52.

[186] Henriquez, "Economic Aggression," in On Trial, ed. Dixon, 51-53.

German.[187] Nicaraguans suffered the brunt of these hostilities. An assassination plot directed at Father Miguel D'Escoto, the Foreign Minister, was revealed in June and evidence suggests that it was planned in the United States Embassy in Managua. In September, the home of D'Escoto was bombed. In October, a bloody massacre occurred in the town of Pantasma, resulting in 47 dead and over two million dollars in damages. Yet again, the Senate voted to continue aid for the program against Nicaragua; the House earlier had voted against paramilitary activities. In effect the Senate appears either oblivious or indifferent to the actual or "real" consequences of the hostilities for Nicaraguans, and, for the future of Nicaragua. By the end of 1983, infastructure damages to Nicaragua were in the area of two billion dollars. Attacks on social welfare workers had multiplied: 53 teachers murdered, 12 health centres destroyed and 300 rural schools forced to shut down. In total, over 800 Nicaraguans lost their lives, some 715 were wounded, 400 "disappeared" by *Contras*.[188]

These "facts" of violence and the *Contra*/revolution were obviously insignificant to the Reagan Administration and the Nicaraguan men they chose to recruit. That is, they were insignificant unless they led to public opposition within the United

---

[187] USOCA, "A Chronology," 24.

[188] USOCA, "A Chronology," 25; and Pasos, "Report on Military Aggression," in On Trial, ed. Dixon, 32-35; Agencia Nueva Nicaragua, "The Defeat of the Counterrevolution," 4-9.

States, as they eventually did. It was only after repeated protests from the public as well as in Latin America countries such as Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama, belonging to the Contadora Group (formed to promote peace), that Reagan changed tactics.[189] Even then, the activities masked the real goals. Between 1983 and 1984, efforts were made to improve the image of the *Contras* and much was made of their improved human rights record by the Reagan Administration. However, Edgar Chamorro Coronel and Salvador Icaza left the FDN directorate primarily because charges of abuse were not addressed and the organization remained heavily influenced by Somoza loyalists such as Bermúdez and Sanchez, despite claims to the contrary.[190] Chamorro Coronel and Icaza claimed the *Contras* were dominated by the military command and in particular the "Bermúdez triangle" which included Bermúdez, Guardsmen loyal to him and the General Secretary Arístides Sanchez.[191] This exodus of image-makers was followed by another reorganization. In the midst of this, Congress attempted to devise legislation which would terminate the Executive's efforts to aid the Contras. First, a look at the image-making activities, then,the actual consequences of counterrevolutionary violence in Nicaragua.

---

[189] Collins, Nicaragua, What Difference Could a Revolution Make?, 290-291.

[190] ACFPC, "Who are the Contras?," in Congressional Record-House (April, 1985), H2336.

[191] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate (March, 1986), S3030.

Although Alfonso Robelo, Fernando and Edmundo Chamorro openly joined the FDN, Edén Pastora was reluctant to be openly aligned with the Guardsmen and he remained somewhat of a renegade; this ultimately gave rise to decreased CIA support. Pastora's allegiance to ARDE, now under the FDN, did not last long and he, along with Brooklyn Rivera of *Misurasata*, and "Mr. Davila" of the Democratic-Christian Solidarity Front, left the group.[192] In part, this was due to a loss of actual power within the formal structure of the FDN; power was held by the most brutal Guardsmen. Pastora's departure was followed by a reorganization of ARDE. Fernando Chamorro assumed Pastora's position as commander. The General Secretary became Dr. Roberto Ferrey. A man named Aníbal Ibarra also became a member of ARDE's directorate.[193] Eventually Pastora's departure became cause for concern for many; there was an attempted assassination at a press conference he was giving at La Penca, just inside the Costa Rican border.[194] It remains unclear "who" exactly attempted to assassinate Pastora, although speculations have been made about the CIA and the FDN and even the *Sandinistas*; most suspect the former. In any event, as money and supplies fizzled, many of ARDE's troops applied for refuge in Costa Rica.[195]

---

[192] Matthews, "The CIA's War," 36.

[193] Eich and Rincon, The Contras, 166.

[194] This attack on Pastora occurred in 1984. See Scott and Marshall, Cocaine Politics, 9, 137-141, 152-159.

[195] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 279.

When Congress cut off aid to the *Contras* because of the multiple reports of brutality and also suspicions concerning the Reagan Administration's "true intentions" -- to depose the *Sandinistas* and not simply to interdict arms to the FMLN -- Reagan allowed his most inept foreign policymaker to craft alternative sources of funding. The key strategist became Marine Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, although he received considerable (and illegal) advice from many others. Illegal and extralegal activities were not conducted without the knowledge of people high in the Reagan Administration, including Bush, Weinberger, Shultz, Kirkpatrick, Baker, Attorney General Ed Meese, among others. Minutes from meetings, testimonies, and a host of private correspondence reveal, without a doubt, that the "secret government" administered from the White House and the NSC was not secret to many within the Administration who turned their heads or actively became involved. This included North's operation, the "Enterprise," which he spearheaded from the NSC.

Subverting Congress: "The Enterprise"

It has been argued that the Reagan Administration's efforts to create an anti-*Sandinista* force commenced prior to the transfer of power from Carter to Reagan. In a Frontline documentary, it was further claimed that Reagan and his Vice-presidential candidate, former CIA Director, George Bush, under its Campaign Director Casey, struck a deal with the Iranian Revolutionary government, then under the Ayatollah R. Khomeini. The meeting took place at the Plaza Hotel in Paris and actually included one of Carter's own NSC staff members, Donald Gregg. He later became NSC Advisor to Vice-president Bush, and then Ambassador to South Korea. Feeling Carter might pull off a victory, Casey apparently spearheaded a deal to delay the release of United States citizens, who were being held hostages, until after the elections. It was thought that delaying the release of the hostages, seized in November 1981, would devastate Carter's campaign. Perhaps coincidently, the hostages were released one-half hour after Reagan's inaugural address in January 1981.[196] However later developments, including swapping arms for hostages, suggested that some kind of deal had been struck with the Iranians *prior* to the Reagan Administration coming to power. The use of hostages as barter was, of course, not only illegal but fundamentally immoral. Yet, such perverse actions seemed to be symptomatic of the Reagan Administration.

From this shadowy beginning, the relations with Iran continued. With the taking of hostages in Iran (there were about 52), Carter had frozen Iranian assets, labelled Iran a terrorist state, and placed an embargo on the shipment of weapons to Iran. The Reagan Administration continued its covert relations with Iran. Between 1981 and 1982, Iran was the recipient of a wide range of covertly shipped United

---

[196] Bill Moyers, Frontline Documentary, "Elections Held Hostage," (Alexandria, Virginia: PBS, April 16, 1991).

States-made weapons. This included weapons and spare parts valued in the area of 246 million dollars. To a significant degree, Israel facilitated these deliveries, using airplanes which had been leased in Argentina.[197] Another strategy of supplying Iran weapons and equipment was to declare certain stock obsolete and then take them from a United States warehouse in Belgium. In particular, the Iranians used bases along the border between Belgium and Germany. The Israeli-Argentinian supply network was blown open when, in February 1981 CASS, the Soviet News Agency, reported that an Argentinian-registered plane had crashed on Soviet territory.[198] The plane had been chartered by Israel from Argentina and had a cargo of United States weapons destined for Iran.

In the beginning the policy had a logic of its own. The Reagan Administration apparently had made a pre-election quid-pro-quo with Iran. Israel also had its own interests in supplying Iran with weapons; Israel supported Iran in its war with Iraq. Both Israel and the United States feared Saddaam Hussein's territorial aspirations and growing power in the region. Israel and the United States wanted to keep the war going. Both anticipated that the war would militarily and financially exhaust both Iran and Iraq. Once the Administration became deeply entangled in supplying a state United States laws described as "terrorist," some effort had to be made to live with it, to mask the hypocrisy. Policymakers seemingly convinced themselves that they were cultivating "moderates" and thus on the road to "normalizing" foreign relations with Iran.

---

[197] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 2-3.

[198] Bill Moyers, Frontline Documentary, "Iran-Contra Scandal" (Alexandria, Virginia: PBS Video, 1990).

The Enterprise has been likened to a "shadow government" and a "vast spider web of secrecy." In his obsession to remove the *Sandinistas*, Reagan chose to rely on inexperienced foreign policymakers such as North for advice, instead of his more senior advisors, Michael Deaver or James Baker. According to Deaver, who was an Assistant to Reagan between 1980 to 1985:

> He [North] was just the kind of guy that Ronald Reagan would like. He was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed...crisped, and seemed to have answers right off the tip of his tongue. It always bothered me that the President of the United States was getting his information from this guy, instead of getting it from 'Cap' Weinberger or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.[199]

Reagan liked North because he was young and quick. He briefed Reagan on Central America, the Middle East and a host of policies; this became a pattern which undermined more orthodox practice of being briefed by career foreign policy officers. Deaver claimed that North, for example, would take trips to the Middle East over a weekend and by Monday morning he was briefing the President as if in that brief visit he had become knowledgeable about such a complex region and the various foreign policy considerations which needed to be taken into account. Amateurs and ideologues became the favoured sons who commanded the ear of the President. In one sense, this was indicative of Reagan's own abdication of his responsibility to "bright-eyed and bushy-tailed" aides; this abdication, combined with poor judgment on counsel, allowed the Enterprise to flourish into the mid-1980s.

---

[199] Deaver's interview with Bill Moyers, "Iran-Contra Scandal," (PBS, 1990).

Money from the arms-for-hostages swap, using Israel and Argentina as middlemen, was diverted to the *Contras*, and perhaps other CIA covert activities. The Enterprise was instrumental in constructing the "arms for hostages" policy. HAWK and TOW missiles were sold to Iran via Israel and Argentina, on the belief that Iran would use its influence to obtain the release of United States hostages held by Shi'ite Muslims in Lebanon. North also thought, or wished, these transactions would help to cultivate "moderates" within Iran. Acting upon CIA intelligence, Reagan authorized six separate arms sale to Iran. This resulted in the release of at least one United States hostage; Benjamin Weir was released on 16 September 1985.[200]

Money from this covert operation, "Irangate," was redirected to the *Contras*, and hence, circumvented the Congressional ban on United States aid to the *Contras*. According to The Tower Commission Report, illicit bank accounts were established in Panama and Geneva with the full knowledge of Abrams, North and Charlie Hill, the Executive Assistant to Shultz.[201] The Central American Task Force at the CIA gave Abrams an account in Panama and Hill gave him an account number at Credit Suisse in Geneva. However, when the Sultan of Brunei proffered 10 million dollars after an Abrams solicitation, the money deposited at Credit Suisse, in Geneva, "went missing."[202] The problem at first had appeared simple. The CIA had given Abrams one account and North had given him another in Geneva; Abrams claimed to have used the latter but the money was never found. In a submission to the Tower Commission, the head of the Central American Task Force stated that Abrams never told him about the second account; "That probably left me as speechless as anything in this whole endeavor, that that $10 million which we sorely needed...disappeared. It just left me dumbstruck."[203] Later the CIA decided to open an account in the Bahamas, as a means of avoiding Panama and also the Cayman Islands which were garnering a lot of attention for money laundering.[204] While this money was not officially accounted for, there were numerous members of the Reagan Administration engaged in the "secret government" with their own shadowy cabinet and foreign relations, including funnelling money to the *Contras* despite a ban which was intended to prohit such actions. These monies eventually were laundered through some 13 banks and 14 corporations.[205]

---

[200] **Bill Moyers, "Iran Contra Scandal," (PBS, 1990).**

---

[201] Tower et al, The Tower Commission Report, 338-341.

[202] Tower et al, The Tower Commission Report, 342.

[203] Tower et al, The Tower Commission Report, 343.

[204] Tower et al, The Tower Commission Report, 342.

The United States Congress had limited the use to which appropriated funds could be directed, and which government agencies, such as the CIA and DOA, could use their funds for the *Contras*. The spirit of the ban was to prohibit the Reagan Administrations' efforts to overthrow the *Sandinista* government in Nicaragua. The NSC was not specifically limited by the ban, the Boland Amendment, but it was also the case that the NSC had no separate source of funding analogous to the CIA's contingency or "slush" funds. Thus North spearheaded two efforts and was at least cognizant of a third. The first was the arms-for-hostages policy with Iran.[206]

The second was vigourous efforts to solicit third-party "donations" to the *Contras* from countries and private individuals.[207] The third effort was the alliance with drug traffickers.[208] These alliances against "communists" are ironic at best and probably just hypocritical. For example, after the Iran-Contra scandal was revealed in a Lebanese newspaper in 1986, subsequent Congressional hearings found a number of irregularities. In his testimony before Congress, one of the Medellín Cartel's accountants Ramón Rodríguez, who himself was caught in Miami with five million dollars in cash and claimed to have managed upwards of 11 billion dollars in drug profits, admitted to funnelling at least 10 million dollars to the *Contras* over a three month period.[209] All three of these represent contra/dictions and raises a serious question: On what grounds are distinctions drawn which favour "terrorists," "drug traffickers," and deceptive solicitations over "Marxists" and/or Cubans?

---

[205] Tower et al, The Tower Commission Report, 453-454.

[206] Bill Moyers, "Iran-Contra Scandal," (PBS, 1990).

[207] Bill Moyers, "The Election Held Hostage," (PBS, April 16, 1991).

[208] Leslie Cockburn, Frontline Documentary "Drugs, Guns and the CIA" (Alexandria, Virginia: PBS, 1988); and Scott and Marshall, Cocaine Politics.

In 1984, the Administration's efforts to support the *Contras* encountered another roadblock. In early 1984, it was learned that the CIA had used Latin American mercenaries called "outside-assets" to mine Nicaraguan harbours. The CIA attack actually had occurred in October 1983. They were directed at Nicaragua's most important port at Corinto. The use of incendiary projectiles resulted in the destruction of a significant percentage of Nicaragua's oil reserves which were stored at the port.[210] Further, operatives in "piranha" speedboats launched attacks on the wharf at Puerto Cabazas, on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. One civilian was killed and some 12 others suffered various degrees of wounds. Port Benjamín Zeledón was bombed, resulting in the destruction of some 400,000 gallons of diesel fuel and the oil supply for the Department of Zelaya.[211] Moreover, at Puerto Sandino, *Contras* placed explosives in the pipeline and signal buoys, causing serious damage to the unloading systems.[212] On the southern border, some 200 *Contras* attacked the Nicaraguan customs at Peñas Blancas, as well as bombed an army post in the same area.[213] No doubt, these attacks were part of the economic warfare that journalists such as Leslie Gelb had happened upon. These efforts, combined with Reagan's pressure on international lending agencies, were geared at sabotaging the Nicaraguan economy. Despite these events, on April 8, 1984, Defense Secretary Weinberger readily lied about the role of the CIA. In responses to media and congressional enquiry he claimed that "[T]he United States is not mining the harbors of Nicaragua."[214] Activities such as this led Congress to continue its restriction on appropriating funds toward the Reagan Administration's now fully unmasked effort to overthrow the *Sandinistas*.

---

[209] Leslie Cockburn, "Guns, Drugs and the CIA," (PBS, 1988).

[210] Joseph Collins, Nicaragua: What Difference Could a Revolution Make?, 3rd edn., rev. (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 290-291.

On June 25, 1984 the NSC Planning Group held a meeting to discuss what could be done to buttress financial efforts to support what participants called "the anti-*Sandinistas*." The minutes of the

---

[211] USOCA, "A Chronology," in Contemporary Marxism (Spring, 1984), 24.

[212] Pasos, "Report on Military Aggression," in On Trial, ed. Dixon, 34-35; Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 34.

[213] USOCA, "A Chronology," in Contemporary Marxism (Spring, 1984), 25.

[214] Green, To Err is Reagan, 20.

meeting confirmed the attendance of a number of high profile policy makers in addition to Reagan and Bush. Those in attendance is central for confirming who had knowledge of the Nicaraguan harbour mining but also extralegal efforts to fund the Contras. The meeting was attended by: Admiral Samuel J. Murphy from the Vice-president's office; the Department of State representatives included Shultz, Michael Armacost and Langhorne Anthony Motley; Weinberger and Dr. Fred Ikle attended from Defense; Dr. Alton Keel from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); Casey and Duane Clarridge from the CIA; Kirkpatrick from the UN; General John W. Vessey, Jr. and Admiral Arthur S. Moreau from the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Edwin Meese, III from the Attorney General's office; McFarlane and Admiral John M. Poindexter from the White House; and finally, Dr. Constantine C. Menges from the NSC.[215] On the agenda was the Congressional ban and what, if anything, could be done by the Executive: (a) heed the letter and spirit of the Boland Amendment or (b) subvert the Congressional ban by directly soliciting other sources of funding.

The notes of the June 25, 1984 meeting suggest the initial tenor was one of the frustration and McFarlane expressed doubt that the Democrats would provide support for "The Nicaraguan Program." Reagan revised the question, "[H]ow can we get that support in the Congress? We have to be more active."[216] Perhaps the initial idea for seeking alternative, non-Congressional funding, came from Kirkpatrick. According to Kirkpatrick, "[I]f we can't get the money for the...anti-Sandinistas, then we should make the maximum effort to find the money elsewhere."[217] Thus, the seed for circumventing the Congressional ban was planted and, with few exceptions, the meeting turned from frustration to one of a calculated effort to subvert the Congressional ban.

---

[215] Moyers, "Iran-Contra Scandal" (PBS, 1990).

[216] Minutes of NSC Planning group meeting, June 25, 1984, Bill Moyers, Front Line Documentary "Iran-Contra Scandal," (PBS, 1990).

The most serious caution was proffered by Shultz who affirmed his own desire to obtain money for "the Contras, but...Jim Baker said that if we go out and try to get money from third countries, it is an impeachable offense."[218] This suggests that although Kirkpatrick gave voice to the plan during this meeting, it must have been discussed at some time prior to the meeting: early enough for Shultz to have consulted Baker. Shultz' interpretation of Baker's counsel was clarified (or challenged) by Casey, who suggested that "Jim Baker said that if we tried to get money from third countries without notifying the Oversight Committees, it could be a problem."[219] Casey's response was somewhat of a red-herring since the point of the meeting was to subvert Congress, not inform it, especially the Oversight Committees. In fact, as Shultz responded to Casey, Baker's position, (consistent with Constitutional intent), was that any funds raised and spent by the United States government must come via Congressional appropriation. The Executive had no separate powers to raise funds. Yet despite Baker's advice and Shultz' caution, the meeting turned toward "impeachable" activities.

---

[217] NSCPG meeting, Moyers, "Iran-Contra Scandal," (PBS, 1990).

[218] NSCPG meeting, minutes discussed in Moyers, "Iran-Contra Scandal," (PBS, 1990).

[219] NSCPG meeting discussed in Moyers, "Iran-Contra Scandal," (PBS, 1990).

Reagan wanted to "obtain the funds to help these freedom fighters." He ignored all the facts. First, it did not seem to have sunk in that he might be impeached. He seemed to have dismissed the Constitutional restriction on his seeking third country funding. Finally, the intent of the Constitution to balance power was dismissed since it was not compatible with his obsession to support the Contras. Despite Reagan's obsession, it was Bush who proposed a possibility of soliciting third party funding which might be compatible with the Congressional ban and avoid "impeachable" acts. Bush gave Reagan a way out. According to Bush, "[T]he only problem that might come up is if the United States were to promise to give these third parties something in return so that some people could interpret this as some kind of exchange."[220] Bush knew this was contrary to the spirit of the Congressional ban, but it was a possible loophole, and it was seized. The key, then, was to get "friendly" countries to "donate" or "offer" to the *Contras* money and military assistance without any apparent return for the United States; there should be no evident sign of a "quid pro quo." All present recognized the gravity, and probable criminality, of the acts being undertaken. McFarlane expressed his hope that the discussion would not be made public. Reagan responded by stating, "[I]f such a story gets out we'll all be hanging by our thumbs in front of the White House until we find out who did it."[221] In 1984, the *Contras* were not popular neither with Congress nor with the American people. Those within the Reagan Administration were doubtful that they could trust the public to support the efforts in Central America.

---

[220] **Minutes of the NSCPG Meeting, Moyers, "Iran-Contra Scandal," (PBS, 1990).**

It seems clear that Reagan understood Congress' intent to stop the *Contra*/revolution. In an interview with Bill Moyers, McFarlane claimed that Reagan "just didn't believe that it was the legitimate authority of the Congress to say that [stop the *Contra*/revolution]."[222] In Reagan's view, it was his show. He determined how he would conduct the support of the war; he was the Commander-in-Chief, not Congress. Consequently he chose to disregard Congress and in MacFarlane's view, Reagan disdained the institution of Congress itself. Not surprisingly, then, in his efforts to fund the *Contras*, Reagan was more prepared to listen to those advisors who could, and would, find ways to circumvent Congress, as opposed to those who would attempt to work with Congress. To this end, Kirkpatrick, Casey and Bush had greater weight that Shultz, Baker,

---

[221] Moyers, "Iran-Contra Scandal," (PBS, 1990).

[222] Moyers, "Iran-Contra Scandal" (PBS, 1990).

MacFarlane and others who expressed doubt or proffered legal obstacles.

In fact, many high level contacts were made with the *Contras* under strict adherence to maintaining a low profile. By late 1984 the FDN was wracked with internal conflict and plagued by human rights reports which documented systematic disregard for human rights, including the previously noted reports by the DIA and Congressional committees. On 28 August 1984, North wrote a memo to McFarlane notifying him that Adolfo Calero wanted a meeting either in Washington or in Honduras on Friday, 31 August to discuss some problems.[223] MacFarlane approved the meeting with the only caution being for North to avoid a 'visible meeting' which might attract public press and especially Congressional attention.

In November 1984, United States elections resulted in a second term in office for the Reagan-Bush team; the Democrats under Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro had lost in a landslide. Four years plus the prospect of another four seemed to have disillusioned the Democrats because efforts to halt the Administration's plans to overthrow the *Sandinistas* became less strident. Congressional Oversight was literally an oversight; it did not occur. This is the context in which third-party solicitations and the arms-for-hostage deals flourished. However, it is important to point out that the *Contras* were already receiving some funding from third party sources, including Israel, Argentina, South Africa and a host of other countries.[224] And, from the realm of the undisputedly illegal, the *Contra* financial assistance from the Medellín Cartel was facilitated by the Cartel's Chief Accountant, Ramón Rodríguez. The following table outlines some of the third party funds which were revealed during an enquiry into the affair, the Tower Commission.

---

[223] Moyers, "Iran-Contra Scandal," (PBS, 1990).

The Invisible Third Parties

In addition to Congressional appropriations, the *Contra* budget was supplemented by high level governmental solicitations from third parties and/or countries. This aid flourished during the two and one-half year Congressional ban (the Boland Amendment period) on aid to the *Contras*.[225] Reagan, Abrams and North were instrumental in obtaining funds from other than Congressional appropriations, the legality of which was questionable (Table I).

---

[224] Nicaraguan daily Barricada (May 13, 1990); CAHI, "Israel's Secret Service to Reorganize Nicaragua's,? Envio 9, 107 (June, 1990), 22-27; Washington Times (April 25, 1990); R. Parry, "From Pretoria to the Contras?," Newsweek (February 15, 1988), 36.

[225] According to Section 8050 of Public Law 99-190, "None of the funds available to the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, or any other agency or entity of the United States involved in intelligence activities may be obligated or expended during fiscal year 1986 to provide funds, material, or other assistance to the Nicaraguan democatic resistance unless in accordance with the terms and conditions specified by section 105 of the Intelligence Authorization Act (Public Law 99-169) for fiscal year 1986." See Tower et al, The Tower Commission Report, 548.

Table I
Official Third Party Solicitations
(Millions, U.S. $)[226]

Country/Individual	Amount	Year/Time Period	Soliciter
Saudi Arabia, King Fahd	8-11*	1984	?
Saudi Arabia, King Fahd	25	1985	Ronald Reagan
Brunei, the Sultan of	10	1986	Elliot Abrams
Taiwan, businessmen	2	Dec.85-Oct.86	Elliot Abrams
South Korea	?	Dec.85-Oct.86	Elliot Abrams
Poland	?	Dec.85-Oct.86	Abrams/Poindexter

*Some estimate between $15-24 million; B. Woodward, The Veil, 508. A. Calero was making $12 million per year. S. Dillon, Commandos, 165.

The estimated total amount of aid to the *Contras* from such sources was about 100 million dollars.[227] Again, the pretext for this aid to the *Contras* was support for "democracy" but these claims are not credible. Paradoxically, at that time, none of the above noted countries could make a legitimate claim to be "cultivating democracy." Yet, according to Reagan, the Saudis helped "because they shared our interest in securing democracy in Central

---

[226] Sources included: G.C. Church, H. Gorey and B. Seaman, "But What Laws Were Broken?," Time (June 1, 1987), 24-26; R. Norland, "The New Contras?," Newsweek (June 1, 1987), 32-38; and T. Jacoby, R. Parry and E. Cliff, "Abrams on the Hot Seat," Newsweek (June 8, 1987), 18-19.

[227] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 258.

America."[228]

1985-1986

The "founding" of the *Unidad Nicaraguense de Oposición* (UNO) was unveiled under the United States' auspices in June 1985. It was headed by the three "A's": Adolfo Calero, Alfonso Robelo and Arturo Cruz.[229] Cruz commanded ARDE's forces with Pastora before becoming one of the "civilian" heads of the United Nicaraguan Opposition. According to *Contra* Silvio Argüello, who had been a Vice-president under Somoza, "UNO was designed to do battle in Congress, not to do battle on the frontiers with the people of Nicaragua."[230] This was in response to the marked hostility and suspicion which was known to exist between the members of UNO's directorate. UNO ostensibly was the civilian political arm of the FDN, and essentially was another response to widespread criticism that the *Contras* were recycled *Somocistas* with few civilians and no political agenda. Throughout all of these changes, the Military Command remained dominated by *Somocistas*.

The majority of these armed opposition groups were supposedly united under the umbrella organization, *Unidas Nicaraguenses de*

---

[228] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 367.

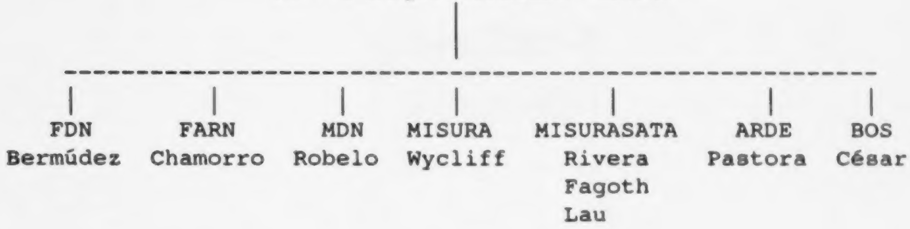
[229] Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 66-67.

[230] Guardian (June 11, 1986), cited in Burns, At War in Nicaragua, 69.

Oposición (UNO) founded by Arturo Cruz, Alfonso Robelo and Adolfo Calero on the 22 January, 1986 in Caracas, Venezuela. After this particular "face lift," the Military Commander of UNO became Colonel Bermúdez Varela, then head of the FDN (Figure II).

Figure II

United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO)[231]
Col. Enrique Bermúdez Varela


FDN
Bermúdez
FARN
Chamorro
MDN
Robelo
MISURA
Wycliff
MISURASATA
Rivera
Fagoth
Lau
ARDE
Pastora
BOS
César

The evidence on the existence of UNO suggested that, for the most part, it was a "Ghost Organization" created to influence the United States Congressional aid debates. It had little practical or operational import vis-a-vis the day to day operations of the *Contras*. At least, this was the finding of the Caucus in two separate reports between 1985 and 1986. These findings were contested by the State Department. The central differentiation between the Caucus and the State Department's reports was to be found in the definition of commanders. Among the other high ranking commanders of the FDN, the State Department claimed there were as many former *Sandinistas* as there were former National Guardsmen. In addition, the State Department claimed that ordinary Nicaraguans, peasants and farmers, out-numbered both. While the former Guardsmen accounted for some 26 per cent of the FDN commanders, former *Sandinistas* accounted for 25 per cent. The single largest group was from the peasantry or small farmers and accounted for some 36 per cent of the total. Of the total, those who were not Guardsmen accounted for some 74 per cent (Table II).

---

[231] Sources include: ACFPC, "Who Are the Contras?," Congressional Record-House (April 23, 1985); ACFPC, "Military Leadership of the FDN," Congressional Record-Senate (March 19, 1986); State Department, "'Who' is the Democratic Resistance?," (March, 1986); "Who's Who," Barricada Internacional, Archives No. 19 (October, 1985).

Table II
Prior Occupations of Commanders of FDN
Task Forces or Equivalent Commands[232]

PRIOR OCCUPATION		NUMBER
Peasants or Small Farmers		19
National Guard		14
Officers	05	
Soldiers	09	
Sandinista Army or Militia		13
Officers	04	
Soldiers	09	
Medical Student		01
No Information		04
Vacant		01
TOTAL		52

In response to the State Department's report, United States House Representatives Matt McHugh and George Miller requested that a letter entitled "Contra High Command Still Dominated By Ex-Guardsmen," be placed in the Congressional Record-Senate of March 19, 1986.[233] The letter disputed both the State Department's characterization of "High Command" as well as the numbers and source of information. The State Department relied solely on the FDN, conducting no independent investigation of its own. The Caucus challenged the reliability of the State Department's report because it relied "primarily on FDN claims, which have been vastly inflated in the past."[234] Thus McHugh and Miller suggested the State Department was propagating information whose reliability it should have doubted, given the fact that the sources were not credible. Beyond its earlier inflated claims, the FDN was not a reliable source because of its dependency on United States support which was contingent on it appearing (as opposed to actually being) a viable alternative to the *Sandinistas*. If it was in fact a cross-section this would suggest viability, especially for public relations purposes. However, if only Guardsmen, this raised serious questions about the nature of the conflict and whether it was actually supported by ordinary Nicaraguan citizens. It is dubious that the State Department actually cared about the FDN representing a cross-section of the Nicaraguan population; the key was to ensure that its propaganda led the international community to think the concern was democratic representation. The propaganda was the reality that mattered.

---

[232] **State Department, "'Who' is the Democratic Resistance?," Table III, Special Report No. 142 (Washington, D.C.: State Department, March, 1986).**

---

[233] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate, (March, 1986), S3027.

[234] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate, (March, 1986), S3027.

As a direct challenge to the State Department's information, the letter by McHugh and Miller referred to UNO leader Arturo Cruz's interview in the Washington Post (March 9, 1986) in which Cruz concluded that "the largest number in the inner staff" were National Guardsmen. Additionally, in his testimony before the World Court in 1985, Edgar Chamorro also had claimed that the FDN was an instrument of United States foreign policy and that the FDN had no authentic position or military strategy independent of the CIA dictates. Moreover, the letter cited Central American analyst and renowned anti-*Sandinista*, Robert Leiken, who concluded in the New York Review of Books (March 13, 1986) that "the FDN High Command, with one exception, is drawn entirely from the National Guard."

While acknowledging that "last year's Caucus report [April 18, 1985] did list commanders at the field level, this year's report [March 19, 1986] clearly indicates that we are unable to confirm or refute any current listing on field commands."[235] However, based on their independent sources, the Caucus maintained its position that the *Contra* high command was dominated by former National Guardsmen, in the second report. Further, the Caucus' research led it to believe that many of the field units had disbanded and were no longer functioning as military units; they were "Ghosts Units" (that is, on paper only). Finally, McHugh and Miller concluded that the leaders of the *Contras* are drawn primarily from the National Guardsmen (Figure III).

---

[235] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate, (March, 1986), S3027.

Figure III
Contra High Command: 1986[236]

COMMANDER	RANK and/or NAME
Supreme Commander	Colonel Enrique Bermúdez*
Theatre Commander	Lt. Walter "Tono" Calderón*
Personnel Commander	Lt. Harley "Venado" Pichardo*
Intelligence Commander	Lt. Rodolfo "Invisible" Ampíe*
Operations Commander	Lt. Luís "Mike Lima" Moreno*
Logistics Commander	Capt. Armando "Polícia" López+
Special Operations, Nicaragua	Carlos "Pajarito" Guillen*
Special Operations, Honduras	Major Ricardo "Chino" Lau+
Air Commander	Capt. Juan Gómez*
Counter-Intelligence	Major Donald "Toro" Torres*
Indian Force Liaison	Capt. Justiciano "Pino" Pérez+
Officer Training Center Commander	Lt. "Trampas"+
Artillery Commander	Lt. "Roberto" [CIA agent]*

* Confirmed by United States Department of State
+ Disputed by United States Department of State

In general, the discrepancies in the reports arise over who should be included in the definition of "High Command." The Caucus disputed the inclusion of heads of finance, the legal office, hospital, public relations and social services as military leaders. They are not included because their duties were primarily political or social, not military.[237]

---

[236] Sources included: ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership Still Former Officers," Congressional Record-Senate (March 19, 1986), S3026-S3030; and Dillon, Commandos, 321-334.

The existence of "*Contra* cells" or support groups within Nicaragua was documented in 1985 with the publishing of Eich and Rincon's The Contras. The survival of these cells was put into direct question in 1987, one year after the 100 million dollars in Congressional appropriation.[238] Norland suggested that whatever internal support or sympathy that had existed for the *Contras* had "fizzled."[239] He attributed this decline in *Contra* supporters in Nicaragua directly to the *Contra* activities of undisciplined, indiscriminate murder and destruction. These latter activities were integral to the *Contras'* method of operation.

Since about October 1985, there had been reports that Cruz, one of the "democrats," had become disenchanted with his lack of voice in the *Contras*.[240] Further, on March 9, 1986, by then an UNO Director, Cruz admitted that "the largest number of the inner staff" were *Somocistas*, particularly Guardsmen. He claimed that the *Contras* were "aware of the need for democracy and we are aware of the need to forget about the past."[241] At that time, Assistant

---

[237] ACFPC, "Contra Military Leadership," in Congressional Record-Senate (1986), S3027.

[238] Rod Norland, "The New Contras? Back in battle, but losing the battle for people's hearts and minds," Newsweek (June 1, 1987).

[239] Norland, "The New Contras?," 32-38.

[240] Christian Science Monitor (October 15, 1985).

[241] Cruz quoted in The Washington Post (March 9, 1986).

Secretary of State Elliott Abrams claimed, "[T]here is no single leader that has more credibility than Arturo Cruz, certainly in this country and I would say in Nicaragua. Nobody's irreplaceable, but he comes as close as you can get."[242] In order to keep Cruz happy with the *Contras*, despite personal conflicts with Robelo and especially Calero, North designed an attractive secret salary which included an extra 7,000 dollars per month for Cruz.[243] Compared to Calero who was receiving one million dollars per month from the Saudis, this was "relatively" minor and a cause for envy.[244] Cruz remained with the *Contras* for another 10 months; however he quit over the undemocratic structure of the FDN and the sheer brutality of *Contra* guerrillas operating within Nicaragua. In subsequent years, further image-making charges occurred; however they represented but another "form" of change without an alteration in substance. In any event, by 1986, the counterrevolution had been "made," in the sense that the United States Executive and Congress united to fund efforts to depose the Nicaraguan government.

IV.8. A Retrospective

In the period of this study, between 1981 and 1986, the United

---

[242] The Washington Post (February 19, 1987).

[243] Doyle Mcmanus, Los Angeles Times (February 20, 1987). This money was funnelled to Cruz for 10 months: January-October, 1986.

[244] Dillon, Commandos, 165.

States Congress appropriated some 350 million dollars in economic, military and "humanitarian" aid and assistance to the *Contras* (Table III). Conservative estimates fix the amount at about 72 million dollars between 1982 and 1984; about 70 million dollars in "humanitarian" and another 57 million dollars in nonlethal aid in 1986.[245] After 1986, however, most of the aid to the *Contras*, still an armed force, was labelled "humanitarian," a concept usually associated with non-combatants.

With the allocation of the 100 million dollars, Congress finally submitted to the will of the Executive. In effect, the United States declared war on Nicaragua, though the Congress did not use direct language. It gave its consent for the overthrow of a foreign government. As I pointed out in the introduction, the Senate, which for the most part had concurred with counterrevolutionary activities, ignored the World Court ruling which explicitly called for a cessation of armed hostilities. By ignoring the World Court, the Contadora Group comprised of Latin American neighbours, the human rights reports and the exodus of the so-called "democratic" elements of the *Contras*, the Administration proved its adherence to brute strength. After 1986, and an end to the pretense of interdicting arms to the Salvadoran guerrillas, the United States openly conducted a war of sabotage, destruction and death.

The consequences of the war for Nicaragua were manifold. In the

---

[245] Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, 367n51.

Table III
U.S. Official Aid to the *Contras*, 1981-1990[246]

YEAR	AMOUNT (Millions, U.S. $)
1981	19 (Congress:Covert)
1982	20 (CIA Contingency Fund)
	19 (Congress:Covert)
1983	24 (Congress:Military)
	12 (Pentagon's Exemption)*
1984 (Oct., 1984-Oct., 1985)	? ("Boland Amendment Ban")
1985	27 ("Humanitarian")
1986 (Jan. 9)	13 (Reagan authorized limited assistance)
1986 (Oct.)	100 (Congress: Mil./"Human.")
1987	10 (Congress:"Humanitarian")
1988	43 (Congress:"Humanitarian")
1989	50 (Congress:"Humanitarian")
1990	10 (minimum: UNO campaigns)

*The Pentagon's 'Operation Elephant Herd' transferred equipment to the Contras via an exemption; it was above the $24 million Congressional ceiling placed on aid given by the CIA, DOD or 'any other agency or entity involved in intelligence gathering'.

---

[246] Sources included: J. McGleary, "But Will It Work?," Time (March 12, 1990); G.C. Church, H. Gorey and B. Seaman, "But What Laws Were Broken?," Time (June 1, 1987); T. Barry and D. Preusch, The Central American Fact Book; and B. Woodward, Veil.

period between 1981 and 1986, the *Contras* had grown to approximately 15,000 to 20,000. The damages they wrought barely can be captured in statistics; however, they provide an additional view of the impact. First, between 1980 and 1986, about 18,963 were killed, 9,663 were wounded and some 7,790 were captured by the *Sandinistas.*[247] Second, kidnappings of civilians were at their peak between 1984 and 1985; there were about 109 reported in 1984, this skyrocketed to 1,200 in 1985 and declined to 400 in 1986. Third, the United Nations Commission on Refugees reported some 217 refugees in 1984, 1,100 in 1985 and this number, again, skyrocketed to 10,000 in 1986. In effect, the period 1984-1986 was the most violent and disruptive for civilians. Fourth, as I have illustrated throughout, indiscriminate attacks were made against civilians, especially those in what might be called social welfare services: teachers, nurses, doctors, and the like. The motives were to intimidate and to instill fear. The result was to destroy the educated and skilled workforce and students. By 1986, over 448 workers were murdered, 540 students, some 500 technical and professional labourers; over 7,000 peasants and about 9,000 military personnel. The latter statistic is significant since Nicaragua's military (as with the *Contras*) was comprised of those between ages 17 and 30; Nicaragua's youth and, in a sense, Nicaragua's future. Fifth, the damage to the economy will be felt for generations and, perhaps, for future students of wars and revolution, it might be important to rethink why nation-states appear more prepared to wage war, at whatever the costs, than to prevent wars or rebuild after wars.

---

[247] Data from the National Institute for Statistics and Census (INEC, December 10, 1986), Agencia Nueva Nicaragua, "The Defeat of the Counterrevolution," 5, 17.

The billions of dollars spent on the *Contra*/revolution, and the billions of dollars in damages, probably will not be mirrored in the allocations for post-war reconstruction. This should present a concern to Nicaraguans prepared to act as proxies in the future: should they collaborate in destroying their own country, when, at the end of the day, the foreign aid will not be there to rebuild? For Nicaragua, the economic losses were staggering: between 1980 and 1986 estimated losses included: 167.9 million due to the United States embargo; blocked loans totalled 341.8 million; and destruction of goods about 128.8 million and production losses about 467.7 million.[248]

The tally could continue; however, my concerns at present are less with what has happened and more with why and how. As I have shown, a distorted and distorting ideology has masked systematically asymmetrical power relations. Unless efforts are made to become conscious of ideologial commitments which mask domination, and try to destroy such relations, then, it will be the case that might masquerades as right.

In this chapter, I began by deconstructing the ideology of Reagan Administration policymakers and how it posited dualisms which depicted the *Sandinistas* as foes, not friends; communists, not democrats. Second, I showed how this ideology was reflected in the allocation of aid for counterrevolutionary forces and also unjust governments opposed to radical change. From this, I shifted to an "inside" examination of the making of the *Contra*/revolution and the "foundation stones" which undergirded the violence for over a decade. This examination included a narration of the multiple contra/dictions: subverting Congress; arms-for-hostages trade; alliances with drug traffickers; and military trade with nation-states which the United States had, for whatever reasons, branded as terrorist. These perverse alliances, which contradicted the Administration's own "public" stances against drug traffickers and those labelled "terrorists," called into radical question the integrity of the Reagan Administration's policies against the *Sandinistas* but also against any of the groups with which it aligned the United States government. In a sense, these stark contradictions were produced by a reductionist and one-way-mirror worldview which sought to project the United States' interests onto the world stage without regard for the other actors.

---

[248] Agencia Nueva Nicaragua, "The Defeat of the Counterrevolution," 17-21.

In the next chapter, I shift my analysis to an examination of ideology and discourse in the construction of religious and ethnic identities. I draw upon the works of Foucault, Marx, Teresa de Lauretis, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Irena Klepfisz, Jean-Paul Sartre among others, to illustrate the caricatured and stereotypical social-identity constructs of Jews and the diverse indigenous peoples of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast.

POWER, IDEOLOGY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE *CONTRA*/REVOLUTION

VOLUME II

BY

MALINDA SHARON SMITH

ABSTRACT

Revolutions and their negations, counterrevolutions, are made. This study is a philosophical enquiry into ideology, power and various discourses in the making and masking, that is ma(s)king, of the Nicaraguan *Contra*/revolution. It explicates the simultaneous process wherein the making of the Nicaraguan Revolution and the *Contra*/revolution were masked through both the calculated and unconscious deployment of various modalities of ideology, including legitimation, dissimulation, fragmentation and reification. It exposes the overlap of external and internal efforts first to prevent the making of the Nicaraguan Revolution, and then to construct the *Contra*/revolution. As such, there never was a moment during the experience of the Revolution when its subversion, the *Contra*/revolution, also was not experienced.

First, this study discusses the conceptual and ethico-practical problems encountered by students of politics engaged in theorizing from the classical period to the advent of postmodernism. Second, it analyzes the history of the United States' global imperialism and its neocolonial relations with Nicaragua. Third, it explores the antagonistic relations between the Administrations of James Carter and Ronald Reagan and the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* which resulted in the former creating the armed forces known as the *Contras*. Fourth, it illumes the anti-Semitic and racist construction of Jewish and indigenous identities, respectively, through the deployment of stereotypes and "planned

hegemony."

Finally, this study shifts to the theorizing of liberation by first deconstructing the making of European hegemony over Americas' indigenous peoples and Africans of the slave diaspora and, then, reconstructing the complex and divergent political histories of Nicaragua's Sumu, Rama and Miskito "Indians," Garífunas or Black Caribs, Creoles and Mestizos. Their struggles for *klauna iwanka* (autonomy) made an indigenous revolution within the revolution which was sometimes obscured by the *Contra* discourse. The body of this text is concerned with the articulation and interrogation of various historical and social relations as well as discourses which ma(s)ked the *Contra*/revolution and produced both intended and unintended consequences.

PREFACE

My greatest hope is that this study does justice to the subjects who inspired it: the *compañeras* and *compañeros* who implored *internationalistas* visiting Nicaragua to tell the truth(s) of their stories abroad. They thought knowledge of such stories would empower Northamericans and their governments to stop the wars which unconscionably decimated their homeland and bonded the future possibilities of their children. For at least two reasons, it can be hoped that this study, which interrogates various conceptions of power, ideology and the workings of discourse in ma(s)king historic events like counterrevolutions, addresses their major concerns, as much as my own. First, because I believe that Nicaraguans, no less than Northamericans, deserve the right to self-determination; they deserve a humane condition which is conducive to the cultivation of their excellences. Second, as I reflect upon Talal Asad's writings, I cannot ignore a truth of this study, and truly much cross-cultural studies: they are inextricably linked to an end which may or may not encompass the concerns of those being studied.

This project is tied to my receiving a Ph.D and it causes me to reflect upon the second formulation of Kant's Categorical Imperative; treat people as an end, as *mündige*, never as a means. I wonder what implications this might have for those of us who are students of international politics and, hence, of relations between apparently different peoples. What might it require of those who desire not to simply repeat or become implicated in longstanding and questionable representations, and/or who desire to record other than what Plato in the Phaedrus referred to as "rememoration" and appearances? I wonder whether the very act of writing rememorations and experiences of history, no matter how unorthodox, contributes to one of the fundamental problems of political life: the ignorance of history or the decline in the power of *anamnesis* (or the act of "unforgetting"). That is, does writing displace memory or is it really a paradox: historical memory is partly contingent upon archives, yet the latter creates the context for forgetting and, hence, for replicating errors of the past? The approach to studying international politics reflected in this study is partly indicative of my thinking on why certain events like counterrevolutions can occur first as tragedy and thereafter are repeated as farce: we never learned; we do not remember; we forget; we study appearances; we assume we already know; we do not want to know; we do not understand.

This study seeks to give proper due to those courageous souls who enriched my life while I stayed in Nicaragua, the memories of whom nourished me when I came close to faltering. It is my fervent hope that the complexities and multilayered texture of the individual and collective histories, experiences and pursuits for liberation by Nicaraguans, have been treated with honesty and fairness.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

V. Chapter V: Ideology, Discourse and the Construction of Ethnic and Religious Identities 348
V.1 Introduction 349
V.2 Ideologies, Discourse and Identities 359
V.3 Contextualizing International Identity Politics 368
V.4 De/constructing the Miskito "Genocide" 380
V.5 Precursor to Forced Relocation 389
V.6 Marxist Indoctrination? 402
V.7 Disinformation and Religious Identities 408
V.8 Contextualizing International Jewish Experiences 420
V.9 Another Holocaust, Anti-Semitism or Hoax? 425
V.10 Conclusions 439

VI. Chapter VI: Theorizing Liberation: History, Colonial Discourse, Indigenous and African Identities 444
VI.1 Introduction 445
VI.2 Interpreting and Re/writing: Post/Colonial History 447
VI.3 From Victorian to Postcolonial Ethnohistory 454
VI.4 Conceptual Framework: Marx, Freud, Marcuse, Gramsci 465
VI.5 The Construction of European Hegemony 488
VI.6 Either/Or Naming: Civilization and Cannibalism 495
VI.7 Myths or Paradigms?: Discovery and Exchange/Encounter 512

VII. *Trabil Nani*: Nicargua's Atlantic Coast from Conquest to *Klauna iwanka* 523
VII.1 Introduction 524
VII.2 *Trabil Nani* 527
VII.3 Decolonization, Neocolonialism 539
VII.4 Ethnohistory, Identities and the Roots of Conflict 545
VII.5 Sumu Experiences 550
VII.6 Rama Experiences 553
VII.7 Miskito Experiences 555
VII.8 Creoles or Criollos Experiences 562
VII.9 Experiences of Garífunas/Black Caribs 565
VII.10 The Mestizo Experiences 569
VII.11 Roots of *Klauna iwanka* or Autonomy 571
VII.12 From Reincorporation to Revolution 596
VII.13 Ethnic Militancy: Revolution in the Revolution 608
VII.14 February 1990 Elections 616

VIII. Chapter VIII: "Real" and "Imagined" Battlefield(s) 622

Bibliography 641

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure IV Miskito Reserve Municipal Constitution (1861) 580

I am attending a conference called The Sounds of Silence. The topic of the day is the social construction of race and gender and oppression. People hurl heavy names at one another: Hegel, Foucault, Adorno. The discussion is interesting, but the undercurrent is dialectical war; there are lots of authority-bullets whizzing through the air.

I think: my raciality is socially constructed, and I experience it as such. I feel my blackself as an eddy of conflicted meanings--and meaninglessness--in which my self can get lost, in which agency and consent are tumbled in constant motion. This sense of motion, the constant windy sound of manipulation whistling in my ears, is a reminder of society's constant construction of my blackness.

Somewhere at the center, my heart gets lost. I transfigure the undesirability of my racial ambiguity into the necessity of deference, the accomodation of condescension. It is very painful when I permit myself to see all this.

Patricia J. Williams
"Mirrors and Windows,"
The Alchemy of Race and Rights (1991).

Chapter V

Ideology, Discourse and the Construction of Ethnic and Religious Identities

> Today, planned authenticity is rife; as a product of hegemony and a remarkable counterpart of universal standardization, it constitutes an efficacious means of silencing the cry of racial oppression. We no longer wish to erase your difference, We demand, on the contrary, that you remember and assert it. At least, to a certain extent.
>
> Trinh T. Minh-ha
> *Woman, Native, Other* (1989).

> ...the phenomenon since the Holocaust has been like a fad, a rock group losing its original sound, a fashionable form of dress that outlives its popularity...[the Holocaust] has been commercialized, metaphored out of reality, glamorized, been severed from the historical fact.
>
> Irena Klepfisz
> *"Resisting and Surviving America"* (1981).

V.1. Introduction

This chapter will examine how fragmentation occurred among the indigenous peoples and Jews of Nicaragua as a consequence of psychological warfare, disinformation campaigns, and various ideological discourses deployed throughout the *Contra*/revolution. This chapter examines three overlapping themes. The first theme discussed is the ideological fragmentation along ethnic lines. In Nicaragua there are multiple indigenous and ethnic groups: Sumu, Rama and Miskito Indians,[1] Creoles, Garífunas, Mestizos and Chinese. However, the Reagan Administration's foreign policymakers focussed exclusively upon the Miskitos and in the process obscured the existence of the "others."[2] In addition to obscuring the existence of the other groups, the Miskitos were represented as the "authentic" indigenous voice. The problems with this construction should become clearer from a brief examination of the "other" indigenous groups who were ignored or consciously hidden in the process. The "authentic" indigenous identity, partly deployed by the Reagan Administration and partly deployed by armed Miskitos, was not a genuine recognition of the indigenous peoples' equality nor was it a recognition of their capacity for, let alone *right to*, self-determination. Rather it was a limited tolerance of "difference." In this chapter I explore the implications of this exclusion and how it confounded understanding. In an attempt to counter the absence of the context in which many of these groups came to inhabit the Atlantic Coast, and their sometimes profound differences, in Chapter VI, I offer some critical comments on liberation; and Chapter VII is an ethnic-centred historical exploration of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast.

---

[1] Recognizing the increasingly contested use of the word "Indian" in the Americas because of its origin in conquest and colonization, I use it with caution. Instead I refer to, for e.g., "Sumus."

[2] "Miskito" and "Miskitos" are anglicized forms. The Indian word is Miskitu and the plural is represented by adding an additional word, "*Miskitú nani*" or "many Miskitú." Similarly in Sumu, the plural is represented by adding a word, "*Sumu balna*." See Jane Freeland, A Special Place in History: The Atlantic Coast in the Nicaraguan Revolution (London: Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, 1988), 9.

The second theme of this chapter concerns the specific charges laid against the *Sandinistas* by the Reagan Administration: that there was a *Sandinista* genocide against the Miskitos, that "concentration camps" were established for Miskitos and, finally, that the Miskitos were active in the struggle against Somoza but became disenchanted when the *Sandinistas* tried to indoctrinate them with Marxism. These allegations of genocide and concentration camps were made in the context of rising anti-Semitism worldwide and whether the claims helped or hindered those adversely affected will be critically examined. This will be done in conjunction with a critical analysis of whether the charges of Miskito genocide made against the *Sandinistas* were fact or fiction. These allegations were repeated by numerous foreign policymakers including Reagan, Alexander Haig, Jeane Kirkpatrick and Elliott Abrams.

The third theme is related but slightly different. I shift the analysis to a more specific assessment of the ideological campaign which systematically sought to associate the status of the Miskitos with the experiences of Jews in Nazi Germany. The problems with this construction are multiple. To do justice to the complexities and ambiguities of this construct, it will be important to contextualize the experiences of Jews in Nicaragua, Latin America and, where useful, Europe during the period when the claims of *Sandinista* anti-Semitism were made. This contextualization will illume the problematic nature of using the holocaust as metaphor or analogy. The latter usage to explain the *Sandinista* relations with the Miskitos neither accurately depicted the actualities of events within Nicaragua nor reflected a heightened sensitivity for the experiences of Jews during the holocaust. The analogy was deployed for instrumental purposes only. Further, the use of holocaust as metaphor was premised on anti-Semitic conspiracy "theories," including the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) belief that the Jews "controlled" the media within the United States.[3] The focus on ethnic and religious "persecution" led to the manufacture of events and the distortion of many others. Following these discussions, I will make some summary remarks in anticipation of the chapter to follow.

By way of introduction, there are several concepts and issues which require preliminary clarification. First, there is a need to revisit the relationship between power, ideology and language, especially fragmentation as a modality of ideology. Second, there is the need to articulate how fragmentation operated within the construction of political and ideological discourses and within social or material reality. I begin with this last distinction and then shift into a brief review of fragmentation.

---

[3] Edgar Chamorro, former FDN leader, cited in Jane Hunter, "A Classic Case of Disinformation: Anti-Semitism and the Sandinistas," in Israeli Foreign Policy: South Africa and Central America (Boston: South End Press, 1987), 170.

The separation between "discourse" and "material reality" is made for three reasons. The first reason is quite straightforward: the distinction is useful primarily for conceptual clarity. The second reason is the need to draw some distinction between two concepts frequently deployed in modern and postmodern political analyses to convey similar phenomena: Michel Foucault's use of "discursive formation" or episteme and the Marxist understanding of "social formation." For Foucault, the notion of a discursive formation partly conveys the context in which discourse, understood as an empirical phenomenon, is situated. Discourse is located within "a field of complex social forces and their relations."[4] In The Order of Things Foucault uses the concept episteme to connote the nature of social conditions which give rise to various forms of discourse and knowledge throughout history, the latter being marked by discontinuous moments. This idea of discontinuous moments is somewhat analogous to the Marxist notion of ruptures throughout history. The "periods" focussed upon by Foucault were the Renaissance, the Age of Reason, the Modern Age and post-Modernity, each understood as a distinct social and discursive formation which gave rise to, or can be identified by, distinct social and discursive practices.[5] The question which is left unanswered is: When, if ever, does discourse end and social or material life begin for Foucault? This question of a probable disjuncture between discourse and social relations is not fully answered by Foucault and as such, it is not clear whether he thinks it is similar to or different from the Marxian notion of social formation.

---

[4] Foucault discusses the concept discursive practice in Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Random House/Pantheon [1967], 1972). See, Charles C. Lemert and Garth Gillan, Michel Foucault: Social Theory and Transgression (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 130.

What seems all too common among many intellectuals who embrace the notion of discursive practices is the tendency to posit discourse in opposition to historical materialism. In doing so they are "denying its interpretive capacities and asserting the superiority of discourse's own project, in which language is reified, texts decontextualized, and politics and understanding textualized."[6] In this oppositional refusal what gets lost is the extent to which historical materialism and social history can embrace prevailing tensions, ambiguities, causal origins, unintended consequences *and* the structural explanations often rejected by discourse theorists. Or, as Bryan D. Palmer observed, historical materialism can appreciate and embrace "a tension ridden duality in which human agency and structural determination" interact creatively and further "can accept that discourse plays a role in constructing social being, just as it can appreciate the importance language plays in the politics of labor and the process of revolutionary transformation."[7]

---

[5] The Age of Reason and post-Modernity are roughly equivalent to the nineteenth and twentieth (after Freud) centuries. See Lemert and Gillian, Michel Foucault, 131.

[6] Bryan D. Palmer, Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 215.

Palmer recognized the need to be cognizant of what might be called a "vulgar" materialism which assumes no human agency as well as a totalizing elevation of discourse which is an all-embracing and illusive authority. In this elevation of discourse, the "text" is and represents everything: words, institutions, social formations and relations of authority. It becomes high and low politics; subversive, transformative and revolutionary. The irony of this is evident when we recognize that all this political activity occurs *without concrete human interaction between social beings* whether of various classes, ethnicities, genders and/or sexualities. The revolution occurs in the head or on the page: deploying language, interrogating sentences, advancing positions. This reification of language often leads to a questioning, and even undermining, of the possibility of political notions and activities such as collaborating and organizing based on the fact of inequalities structurally centred in aspects of identity like class position or gender. In the analysis in this chapter, I want to pay attention both to discourses which signify as well as the concrete practices of historical materialism: in particular, social (ethnic, religious) formations, exploitation and revolution. I take seriously the tensions which can arise from the privileging of discourses of signification wherein

---

[7] Palmer, Descent into Discourse, 215.

"the" text comes to order a "world of texts," leading to an unfettered pluralism which chaotically decentres the social world and denies the existence of tangible structures of power/domination. Toward this end, the work of Teresa de Lauretis is particularly useful.

In Alice Doesn't, Lauretis posited a notion of subjectivity which is based on real or concrete practices, experiences and events which must be understood in the context of various historical conjunctures.[8] She argued that subjectivity or human agency is produced "by one's personal, subjective engagement in material practices, discourses, and institutions that lend significance (value, meaning, and affect) to the events of the world."[9] However, problematically, Lauretis also argued that subjectivity is not produced by "external ideas, values, or material causes." Yet, the latter rejection cannot be so unambiguous if in fact subjectivity is produced by active engagement with the material (and ideological) world. If such a dynamic is accepted, then subjectivity can be influenced positively or adversely by ideas, values and material causes. Thus, it cannot be an either/or proposition between, for example, practices and ideas, materialism or idealism. In positing this view of subjectivity, the focus is shifted away from the totalization of language or textuality, a position too often taken by those postmodern theorists who oppose essentialism.

---

[8] Lauretis, Alice Doesn't (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

[9] Lauretis, Alice Doesn't, 161.

Lauretis does this shifting from the reification of language to practices, discourses and institutions specifically with regard to women. However I think the analysis has meaning for racial or ethnic and religious identities as well. Alice Doesn't is a critical examination of the relationship between "women" and "historical being" as opposed to some fictional or metaphorical construct. She suggests that "women as historical subjects and the notion of women as it is produced by hegemonic discourse is neither a direct relation of identity, a one-to-one correspondence, nor a relation of simple implication."[10] There is no easy correlation between the women of discourses and how women have acted as subjects, as agents, throughout history. Further, women act but they are also acted upon and how this interaction occurs must be examined. Thus, in positing an identity, whether along class, race and/or gender lines, what we need to remain cognizant of is the political utility of identities both as a subjective basis for acting and as a position from which others interact with or upon various political subjects. The value of this approach, then, is its ability to recognize human agency in various identity constructs (besides Marxists' almost exclusive focus on class) and the relevance of social practices, experiences, and discourses in a historical context. The latter are fundamental to this present analysis.

---

[10] Lauretis, Alice Doesn't, 5, 6.

Discourse and social or material reality, then, are not necessarily distinct realms. However, there is a third reason for the conceptual separation. The architects of the *Contra*/revolution operated from the assumption that ideological discourse and actual concrete social relations were in some fundamental sense distinct even if ultimately connected. Thus as I have discussed in Chapters I and II, the human mind was the battlefield upon which a war of words was launched through mass media and in various international forums. In contrast, the geophysical terrain involved the more observable features of war: armed fighting, brutal deaths, tortures, rapes, prisoners of war, struggle over territory, and so on. Wars on both terrains were understood to be necessary for "victory"; the means to the end were conceived as different or at least requiring different kinds of ammunition. Only in Nicaragua did the two battlefields intersect or combine on a consistent basis. This leads to the second conceptual clarification, namely that of fragmentation.

John Thompson, in "Language and ideology," described fragmentation as a modality of ideology through which "[R]elations of domination may be sustained by the mobilization of meaning in a way which fragments groups and places individuals and factions in opposition to one another."[11] Through language, the meaning and signification of events either can be illuminated or obscured;

---

[11] Thompson, "Language and ideology: a framework for analysis," The Sociological Review 35, 3 (August, 1987), 521.

individuals and groups can be included or excluded or simply hidden within certain political discourses. Given the discourses producing exclusion and obscuration, it is necessary to examine the "politics of language, categories, and concepts informing [not only racialized but also] racist practice" for these are part of the ways of perceiving, representing and acting in post/modern politics.[12] This chapter will look more closely at how the neoconservative and realist policymakers within the United States deployed fragmentation or, alternately, how their actions resulted in fragmentations which preserved United States hegemony in the Americas. Such intentional actions, combined with unintended consequences, also reproduced ethnic and religious caricatures and stereotypes of certain identities evident since the colonial period. The latter reproduction, in turn, preserved the prevailing ethnic and religious hierarchies. It will be important to illustrate how this was accomplished through the deployment and interaction of various ideological discourses and the fact of differences in social formations.

V.2. Ideologies, Discourse and Identities

The dominant Reagan Administration foreign policy discourse was concerned with shaping how certain identities, in particular Miskitos and Jews, were constructed. Language was used to create, transmit and contest meaning[13] in the international political relations between the United States and Nicaragua. This included written, recorded and especially spoken expressions. Thus the examination of "discourse" here concerns these various linguistic expressions and how they were mobilized to convey specific meanings within both national and international political contexts. Such discourses framed and delimited the context in which ethnic and religious identities were understood within Nicaragua and internationally. This framing and delimiting occurred through the use of stereotypes, metaphors, analogies and through hierarchal and exclusionary modes of representation. These often sophisticated, sometimes crude and frequently elusive practices were partly indicative of the modern manifestations of racism and anti-Semitism.[14] They also were indicative of the intentions of those with power to utilize whatever ideological means necessary to preserve domination within social relations and institutional structures. In an effort to cast light on these practices, it important to deploy, as David Goldberg suggested, "modes of resistance and opposition--in perceiving, reading, and acting--by identifying the changed and changing presumptions, premises, representations, and expressions of exclusion and exclusivity that make up the body of racist discourse."[15] There was a simultaneous dual reflexivity operating in the discourses encompassing certain indigenous, ethnic and religious identities within Nicaragua. By this I mean that ethnic and social fragmentations in intellectual discussions both reflected and exacerbated already existing fragmentations as well as produced new tensions, divisions, fears and even antagonisms. This was noticeably the case among indigenous peoples and Jews.

---

[12] David Theo Goldberg, "Introduction," Anatomy of Racism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), xiv.

---

[13] Thompson, "Language and ideology," 520-521.

[14] See for e.g. Homi K. Bhabha, "Interrogating Identity: The Postcolonial Prerogative," 183-209; David Theo Goldberg, "The Social Formation of Racist Discourse," 295-318, both in Anatomy of Racism, ed. David Theo Goldberg; Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 95.

Fragmentation occurred among indigenous and ethnic peoples themselves and also between the latter and the predominantly Spanish-speaking population on the Pacific Coast. In part this was due to campaigns of disinformation during the *Contra*/revolution which were constructed upon covertly racist assumptions. In what might be called the colonial or colonizer's discourse, the indigenous peoples were romanticized in ways reflective of the European colonialists' notions of "noble savages" needing an outside catalyst to be "saved" or "civilized." As Francis Jennings pointed out, in the colonial discourse, the "Caucasians of Europe are not only holy and white but also *civilized*, while the pigmented savages of distant lands are not only idolatrous and dark but *savage*."[16]

---

[15] Goldberg, "Introduction," Anatomy of Racism, xv.

[16] Jennings, The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest (New York: Norton, 1976), 6.

Further, they were represented as being *different* implicitly in the sense of inferior, backward, uncivilized. Yet, different from whom, what? This was somewhat ambiguous. A careful reading suggested that they were presumed to be fundamentally different from the European colonizers who, in turn, were superior, civilized, the norm and beneficient. Such ideological dichotomies were first posited by Catholics during the Inquisition and in the "New World" were given expression during colonization, especially against Jews, witches and indigenous peoples.[17] Today this dichotomous thinking of "we" versus "them" is indicative of most contemporary western ideological constructs.

One contemporary representation of this view came from Reagan's policymakers. However, arguably, some of the *Sandinistas'* attitudes were also imbued with similar notions of backward and civilized. These attitudes are reflective of what Che Guevara referred to as the colonial mind, the crucible in which dualistic and hierarchal notions of superiority-inferiority, backward-civilized spawned by the Europeans are internalized and reproduced by those they colonized. This savage-civilized construct was reflective of many European intellectual discourses which demonstrated a lack of understanding of indigenous peoples. In Chapter One, I discussed how this was the case for both liberals and Marxists. Mill, Marx and Engels shared similar sentiments about the need for European nations to colonize the "New World" in order to civilize backward peoples. In effect, then, these hierarchal notions have carried over into the postcolonial period but in more subtle forms.

---

[17] Joel Kovel, "Naming the Conquest," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 50-51.

The idea of indigenous and European "difference" in this case is inextricably connected with a norm which presupposes "sameness," homogeneity, universality or a totality. The colonial discourse posited an identity which called to mind Trinh T. Minh-ha's incisive recognition that "[D]ifference as uniqueness or special identity is both limiting and deceiving. If identity refers to the whole pattern of sameness within a human life, the style of a continuing me that permeates all the changes undergone, then difference remains within the boundary of that which distinguishes one identity from another. This means that *at heart*, X must be X, Y must be Y, and X *cannot* be Y."[18] Along this line, the Reagan Administration discourse concerning the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua often represented the various groups as unproblematically undifferentiated and often implicitly as unequals. All of Nicaragua's indigenous peoples were represented as if they were the same and, in particular, the same as the Miskito Indians. Further, they were represented as "different" meaning "not the same" as Europeans, past or present. Such discourses posited stable and immutable identity constructs.

---

[18] Minh-ha, "Difference: 'A Special Third World Women Issue,'" Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 95.

The second occurrence of fragmentation was among Nicaraguan and Central American Jews as well as between the latter and North American Jews. Some individual Jews and groups took definite positions in opposition to the *Contras*, others lobbied for *Contra* aid. There was also fragmentation, at least ideologically, being fostered between Jews and non-Jews. This occurred insofar as non-Jews such as Nicaraguan *Contra* leader Edgar Chamorro and others were advised by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to target Jews on anti-Semitic grounds, namely the assumption that Jews own and control the media within the United States.[19] The policy was manufactured to cater primarily to a mass media audience within the United States but I will illustrate how it also had an international dimension. The foundation of the policy was based upon anti-Semitic assumptions and the ideological strategies produced caricatures and stereotypes of Jews. In the case of Jews, it is not clear whether fragmentation was the intended consequence since the strategies were premised on Jews as a monolithic or a homogenous totality. In effect, "the" identity of Jews to be deconstructed in what might be called the anti-Semite discourse, is both related to and unrelated to what existed in social reality. It is the stereotypical Jew, the Jew as metaphor, objectified and represented by anti-Semites and as deconstructed by

---

[19] Former FDN leader, Edgar Chamorro, testimony at the World Court, quoted in Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 170.

Irena Klepfisz in "Resisting and Surviving America."[20] In the essay, Klepfisz discusses the implications for Jews of the commodification of experiences such as the holocaust in mass consumer North American societies and, in particular, the now common use of the holocaust as a metaphor to describe a plethora of contemporary social ills. The "use" of the Jews and Jewish experiences during the *Contra*/revolution represented part of this larger process of divorcing the concept "the holocaust" from the actual historical experience.

There were aspects of these discourses which were more explicitly anti-Semitic and indicative of the kinds of myths and stereotypes articulated by Jean-Paul Sartre in Jew and Anti-Semite and Judith Laikin Elkin in "Quincentenary: Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism."[21] They invoked myths such as the age-old one of "Jews as Christ-killers." This myth has been widespread within Nicaragua and throughout Latin America since the colonial period. The use of stereotypes usually involved Jews constructed as an undifferentiated group "controlling" resources or institutions such as the media or as uncritically "reacting" to charges of anti-Semitism even in the midst of disinformation. On the one hand the latter rightly presupposed that most Jews would care about anti-Semitism. On the other hand, it relied on a homogenous response which had to presuppose that Jews would respond the same, and further, that they would accept as fact any charge of anti-Semitism simply because it was made. This CIA strategy had the effect of exacerbating and complicating in various ways the politics of both United States and Nicaraguan Jews. This latter effect or what for the CIA was a "side-effect," captured the indifference of many foreign policymakers within the Reagan Administration to the human suffering and pain which were the consequences of their policies. They were bent on destroying the *Sandinistas* and, indirectly, the "evil empire."

---

[20] Klepfisz's essay "Resisting and Surviving," originally written for the Anthology of Jewish American Poets, is in Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology, ed., Evelyn Torton Beck (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 112-123.

[21] Elkin, NACLA Report on the Americas, XXV, 4 (February, 1992), 4-7.

The consequences of these assumptions, practices, experiences and relationships were many. Complex and multilayered fragmentations occurred and with them came confusion, superficial and contradictory knowledge, social divisions and conflict. Fragmentation as a modality of ideology, especially the ideology of those who have power and who understand power as dominance, is an act of disempowerment to preserve relations of inequality and dominance. Those in positions of power often intentionally deploy stategies of psychological warfare which are meant to create fissures, divisions and essentially to "divide and rule" or "divide and conquer." In some cases unintended or unplanned schisms occurred as a consequence of the more deliberate efforts. As Thompson notes in the discussion of fragmentation, the notion of divide and conquer often seems like a maxim. However, processes of fragmentation are sometimes less intentional than the maxim suggests. Yet, these unintended "spin-offs" or "side-effects," in my view, are not incidental or less significant because of the absence of intentionality. The fact that political will sought to create and exploit existing schisms or, at least, were indifferent to them in the first place, should influence the rational assessment of accountability and the moral assignment of responsibility.

This analysis of fragmentation is not intended to imply that prior to ideological warfare the indigenous peoples or Jews were unified groups or even that some kind of consensus existed among the various social groups and movements. Rather, it is a recognition that during the *Contra*/revolution ideological warfare encompassed one of several different strategies: either a deliberate effort to create socio-political schisms or a deliberate effort to exploit already existing socio-political schisms. The consequences were several-fold and crossed the boundaries of both national and international politics. It effectively tainted the *Sandinistas'* credibility in the international political arena. While this latter effect was consistent with the intent of the Reagan Administration's strategies of psychological warfare, it also revealed a marked disinterest in the internal political conditions under which the area's peoples would have to exist once the armed hostilities ended.

The Reagan Administration's claims constituted the dominant context in which the Miskitos catapulted to international attention. In many respects these claims confounded the possibility of a reasonable understanding of the nature of *Sandinista*-Miskito relations. However, they also confounded the nature of ethnic politics within Nicaragua. Thus prior to critically analyzing the specifics of the Reagan Administration's representation of the Miskitos, I want to reveal the indigenous and ethnic identities which were hidden in the dominant discourses and point out some of the meanings which could be assigned to the exclusions.

V.3. Contextualizing International Identity Politics

The invisibility of the multiple indigenous and ethnic groups in the Reagan Administration's foreign policy discourse is a testament to the effectiveness of contemporary disinformation campaigns. Absent from the dominant discourse was any mention of the 120,000 Mestizos, the 30,000 Creoles, 8,000 Sumus, 1,500 Garífunas and some 800 Ramas.[22] These different ethnic communities have existed on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast for centuries. At least two predate the historical existence of the Miskitos: the Sumu and Ramas. Even if it is arguable that complex knowledge of each group by Reagan Administration policymakers was not feasible in the beginning, it is dubious that the architects of the "Miskito cause" remained ignorant of at least the presence of the "others." It is highly dubious that such a presence could have escaped their attention over the ten to twelve years of the *Contra*/revolution. Thus it can be presumed reasonably that the obscuration in later foreign policy discourse was deliberate. In this sense, the prominence of the Miskitos in Reagan Administration foreign policy discourse and the invisibility and marginalization of the "other" indigenous and ethnic population, was intended to exploit and exacerbate already existing fragmentations. Or, minimally, it was intended to manipulate social formations within Nicaragua toward the end of overthrowing the *Sandinistas*. Thus, part of the process of deconstructing misrepresentations and distortions is necessarily concerned with constructing alternative representations. This includes making visible the "other" indigenous and ethnic population. This will be done briefly below and more fully in the chapter to follow.

---

[22] Autonomy Commission, "Principles and Policies for the Exercise of the Right to Autonomy," Autonomy (Managua, July, 1985), 46.

In the foreign policy discourse of the United States, the determination of who would count as significant political actors was deliberately selective. The discourse operated to highlight certain groups and issues as well as to hide or obscure certain others. In the Reagan Administration discourse the *Sandinistas* were constructed as the principal protagonist relative to the Reagan Administration. Both were "leaders" in their respective countries although the Reagan Administration, as the representatives of the United States, was materially more powerful. Similarly, the Miskitos were constructed by the more powerful Reagan Administration as the "internal other" relative to the *Sandinistas* although there were clearly other internal contending voices: the Nicaraguan women's movement, the labour/union movement and the various indigenous peoples' organizations and activism. This might suggest that the existence of Sumus, Ramas, Garífunas or Creoles was thought to be irrelevant. Perhaps more accurately it was assumed that knowledge of their existence would have complicated the simple dualistic constructs of: "us" and "them," "Miskitos" and "*Sandinistas*." Together these excluded groups constituted the majority of the Atlantic Coast population.

The Reagan Administration helped to put the Miskitos of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast on the international map. Between 1981 and 1982, it became widely known that the approximately 80,000 Miskitos were an indigenous people of Nicaragua with a distinct language and culture. While this is somewhat true, the exclusive focus on the Miskitos was problematic in several ways. Here, I say "somewhat" not to challenge the Miskitos' self-identity as it was perceived and articulated by the dominant armed Miskito activists. Rather I want to illustrate the complex history and construction of identities and the politicization of identities on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. In some cases (and I would argue that the Miskitos are one such case), such constructs are based on powerful modern myths about who constitute, or who will be allowed to be constructed as, pre-Hispanic peoples. At this juncture, such distinctions might become clearer after a brief look at the various ethnic groups.

The Sumus are believed to be originally of South American

Macro-Chibcha origin. They are one of the oldest surviving indigenous groups in Nicaragua and their "distinct" culture and language has been preserved mostly by isolation. The Ramas are of similar origin. They also have their own culture and language although increasingly many communicate in Creole English only.[23] Creole English has been the *lingua franca* of the area since the British who had colonized the area negotiated autonomy in 1860. An increasing inability to communicate in the native tongue was also true of the original Indians of the Caribbean, the Garífunas or Black Caribs. They were deported to the area by the British in the late 1600s. Apparently the Black Caribs are distinct from the Carib (or Quiribies) Indians who came to inhabit the Middle Americas in the fourth century B.C. However, it would not be too surprising if the two groups were originally related.[24] The Creoles (or Mulattoes) are of mixed African-European and, to a lesser extent, African-Indian ancestry. Africans were imported to the Pacific area on individual licenses issued by the Spanish Crown in the 1500s. Other Africans ended up in Nicaragua after a shipwreck in 1641 and by virtue of this they were "free blacks." In the 1700s and 1800s many blacks emigrated to the Atlantic Coast from Caribbean islands especially Jamaica.[25]

---

[23] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity in Nicaragua: Capitalist Modernization and Revolutionary Change on the Atlantic Coast (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), 3. This might change. The *Sandinistas* implemented literacy campaigns in traditional languages of the coast in 1981 although Indian suspicion of the central government reduced its initial effectiveness.

[24] Harvey K. Meyer, Historical Dictionary of Nicaragua (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1972), 68, 354.

The largest ethnic group on the Atlantic Coast, the Mestizos, are of mixed Indian, European and African ancestry and speak primarily Spanish.[26] Their movement to the Atlantic Coast from the Pacific started in the 1800s and was primarily economically motivated. Another generally invisible ethnic group is the Chinese. Those Nicaraguans of Chinese heritage often go unmentioned in the literature although Asian migrants to Central America can be traced to 8,000-1,500 B.C.[27] Over the years many more migrated to the area and the numbers increased in the 1880s. At that time they worked primarily in the retail trade.[28] Their successes led the North American commercial competitors to lobby for a law which forbade further Chinese immigration in July 1895.[29] These peoples of diverse cultures and languages, are commonly referred to as *costeños* or people of the Coast, in contrast to the *"Panias,"* the "Spanish" or people of the Pacific Coast. References to their existence was suppressed by the Reagan Administration and the Miskitos became privileged in international political discourse.

---

[25] Linda A. Newson, Indian Survival in Colonial Nicaragua (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 123, 131-142, 249-258.

[26] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 3-6.

[27] Robert Stone, After the Fire's Gone Out: The Legacy of a Revolution (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1991), xiii.

[28] Mary W. Helms, Asang: Adaptations to Culture Contact in a Miskito Community (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1971), 11, 34, 40.

[29] Perez-Valle, Expediente de Campos Azules, Historia de Bluefields en sus documentos (Managua, 1978), 241; Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 7, 48-49, 137.

Anthropological and archeological evidence suggest the "Miskitos" did not exist prior to the 1700s. They are believed to be the historic product of Sumus (a pre-Hispanic peoples) and Africans from a ship wrecked in the area in about 1641.[30] While this is speculative, it is possible that Miskitos with a visibly stonger African heritage either came to identify themselves with Creoles and to speak primarily Creole English or were identified by ethnographers as such. Perhaps a visibly "more black" or "more African" appearance is what undergirds the ethnic construct of Zambo-Mosquito in Nicaraguan-origin literature. In some North American anthropological literature all Miskitos are identified as Zambo-Mosquito.[31]

This suggests that the Miskitos' identity as "Indians" is ambiguous if it is contingent on the criterion of "authenticity," meaning "pure" or "not mixed." Yet, the Miskitos were sometimes represented as "the authentic" indigenous voice of Nicaragua and this was often centred in a pre-Hispanic and "pure" origin. The ambiguity of the Miskitos' origins is evident in an interesting and informative essay on the Atlantic Coast by Gillian Brown entitled "Miskito Revindication: Between Revolution and Resistance."[32] Drawing upon data from the *Centro de Investigaciónes y Documentación de la Costa Atlantica* (CIDCA), the author identified six "races" on the Atlantic Coast, including the "Miskitos" whose "origins" are characterized as "Pre-Hispanic" along with Sumus and Ramas.[33] However, in the immediate paragraphs below this characterization, Brown claimed that the Miskitos are the result of the intermixing between African slaves brought to the area in the mid-1600s and the "Indians, creating a phenotypically diverse population, who by the end of the 17th Century had become known as Miskito or Mosquito."[34] In effect, she identified the two competing theories of Miskito origin and in the process preserved the ambiguity evident during the *Contra*/revolution. In contrast to the Miskitos, the Sumus whose "roots" or "origins" are actually traceable to pre-Hispanic existence in the area, were rarely, if ever, mentioned by Reagan Administration policymakers. Further, most analyses of the Atlantic Coast centred primarily on the Miskitos, implicitly conceding the centrality of their power/dominance, or were at least forced to contend with their presence and influence.

---

[30] See Newson, Indian Survival, 38; and Helms, Asang, 16-19.

[31] The rationales for this are discussed in Newson's Indian Survival, 38-41.

---

[32] Brown, "Miskito Revindication" in Nicaragua: A Revolution Under Seige, ed., Richard Harris and Carlos M. Vilas (New Jersey: Zed Books, Ltd., 1985), 175-201.

[33] Brown, "Miskito Revindication," 178.

[34] Brown, "Miskito Revindication," 178.

The Reagan Administration reliance on the Miskitos' authentic identity is what Trinh T. Minh-ha aptly referred to as "planned authenticity."[35] It appeared to allow the articulation of difference but only to a certain degree. However, the "difference" was premised on the "sameness" or homogeneity of the group as a whole. Further, as long as the Miskitos' difference was articulated only in relation to the *Sandinistas*, the United States' "enemy," it was affirmed. Thus it might be imagined that had the indigenous difference been posited in opposition to the United States' hegemony, it would have been constructed as illegitimate, as a crisis of ungovernability, as externally inspired or conspired.

The articulation of difference within both the United States and Nicaragua was perceived as divisive and subversive. In Nicaragua, this was tolerated, even advocated, by policymakers such as Elliott Abrams, Kirkpatrick and Reagan himself. In Chapter I it was shown that within the United States, the neoconservative establishment lamented the assault on universality by centring their criticisms within a mythical homogenous tradition and by dismissing legitimate aspirations for equality and inclusion by marginalized groups as a threat to order and stability. Given this context, if this indigenous articulation of difference was perceived to challenge, threaten or subvert United States hegemony, it would not have been viewed so favourably. An effort would have been made by the Reagan

---

[35] Minh-ha, Women Native Other, 89-91.

Administration to challenge the authenticity of Miskito identity based on a pure, stable origin and the political demands tenuously constructed upon such an identity. It can be reasonably imagined that there would have been efforts made to delegitimize and to silence the claims for full regional self-determination made by Miskitos. In such cases, if the origin shifted or was "mixed" in any way, then the very nature of the claims themselves could be called into question.

This planned authenticity centred in mythical notions of homogeneity and sameness actually resulted in fragmentation among Miskitos and between Miskitos and the other indigenous and ethnic groups. The deliberate process of (mis)representing the Miskitos either as the only indigenous peoples or as "the" authentic voice of indigenous peoples obscured these "side-effects." By invoking the very idea of inauthentic, Reagan's policymakers reinscribed the traditional Eurocentric discourses discussed in Chapter I. These discourses conceptualized indigenous peoples as backward, barbarians, or as an "endangered species" needing a saviour or benefactor in order to civilize, develop and modernize.[36] Thus, this was an invoking of a contrived authenticity which affirmed the difference of Miskitos but only in the sense of division, separation, fragments. Minh-ha described it as a process in which words are "manipulated at [the dominant's] will...'difference' is essentially 'division' in the understanding of many. It is no more than a tool of self-defense and conquest."[37] Even as international analysts were acquiring knowledge about the Miskitos, it was in a context in which their ethnic difference was being understood as the basis for conflict and separatism as opposed to the basis for inclusion and rectificatory justice.

---

[36] See for e.g. Thomas McCarthy, "Doing the Right Thing in Cross-cultural Representation," Ethics 102 (April, 1992), 635-649.

At the heart of this "semantic trap" as Minh-ha calls it, is an ideology of separation, a "separate but equal" ideology which does not really challenge and displace the hegemony of Eurocentric or paternalistic ways of constructing or interacting with indigenous peoples. Such a construction of indigenous difference can be understood as "a product of hegemony" and a "counterpart of universal standardization."[38] In effect, it was a re/inscription which did not challenge the prevailing order of things and, in fact, was consistent with the existing relations of power/domination. Ironically, the initial paternalism of the *Sandinistas* was imbued with similar reasoning and perhaps reflected, as I suggested earlier, what Guevara observed in Guerrilla Warfare: the colonial mind (or mentality) exhibited by many subjugated peoples socialized to see their difference as inferiority, continues after official colonization ends.[39] Colonization thus can be preserved through the internalization of these distinctions within the minds of many persons who are, ostensibly, postcolonial subjects. This seemed true of the *Sandinistas'* attitudes to the indigenous and ethnic populations.

---

[37] Minh-ha, Women, Native, Other, 82.

[38] Minh-ha, Women, Native, Other, 89-90.

[39] Guevara, Guerrilla Warfare (New York: Monthly Review, 1961]; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1969), 89.

The *Sandinistas* thought of the *costeños* as "little brothers" on the Atlantic Coast. The FSLN "Declaration of Principles with regards to the Indigenous Communities on the Atlantic Coast" referred to the Indians as part of "the indigenous masses of America, traditionally exploited, oppressed and subjected to the rigours of a brutal internal system."[40] It described the indigenous conditions as being the result of colonization and imperialism and affirmed the Nicaraguan Revolution as the catalyst for hope and transformation. In effect, there was no real sense in which the indigenous peoples were understood as being agents of social change. They were not conceived of as equal partners in the quest for transformations in the asymmetries of political, economic and social power which have been fostered from the colonial period right on through the Somoza dictatorship. Further, the *Sandinistas'* slogans often expressed the relationship between the Revolution and the Atlantic Coast as one in which "the Atlantic Coast: the Giant awakens."[41] Many *costeños* did not see themselves as having been asleep nor did they like the representation of the *Panias* from the Pacific Coast as being the gadfly of the Atlantic. Another metaphor pointed out by Carlos Vilas constructed the relationship in terms of mountains which produced revolutionary cadres and jungles which produced backward peoples.[42] Thus, "[T]he mountains were *something more than a great green steep*...they were *a great crucible in which the best cadres were forged*...The jungle, on the other hand, was synonymous with the primitive; at bottom, it was mysterious, the unknown, treacherous."[43] In effect, there were widespread stereotypes among the *Sandinistas* which conceived of the *costeños* as passive and backward and the *Sandinistas'* contact as awakening those who slept through the various historical and political ruptures on the Pacific. These images were largely inaccurate despite the fact that some Miskitos, including Brooklyn Rivera, accepted at least one of them as a valid representation: "[O]f course, the Revolution made this whole movement [for autonomy] possible...Before there was no incentive...we were just asleep."[44] These representations are the result of complex political, historical and social relations which were captured neither in the slogans of the *Sandinistas* nor the caricatures of the Reagan Administration.

---

[40] FSLN and the Government for National Reconstruction, "Declaration of Principles" (Managua, August 12, 1981).

[41] Freeland, A Special Place, 38.

---

[42] Vilas, "Revolutionary Change and Multi-Ethnic Regions," Ethnic Groups and the Nation State (Stockholm: University of Stockholm and CIDCA, 1987), 76.

[43] Vilas, Ethnic Groups, 76; Freeland, A Special Place, 38.

[44] Rivera interview with Philippe Bourgois, January 11, 1984. See Bourgois, "Ethnic Minorities" in Thomas W. Walker, ed., Nicaragua Five Years On (Praeger, 1985), 211.

These discussions, of how the discourses work and the images and representations they constructed, will inform the remaining analyses throughout this chapter. What needs to be demonstrated now is how a more textured and inclusive representation of *costeños*, their experiences and stories, would have painted a very different and much more complex picture than the one most familiar to international observers of the *Contra*/revolution. The purpose of psychological warfare is not to educate, nor to point out subtleties, nuances and ambiguities. Rather, it is to confound the understanding through the oversimplification of experiences and the selective dissemination of information. It is antithetical to genuine knowledge. With this in mind, I want to shift the analysis to a more direct focus on how the Miskitos were "used" by the architects of the *Contra*/revolution.

V.4. De/Constructing the Miskito "Genocide"

The use of the Miskitos to engender support for the *Contras* began early in the Reagan Administration. In January 1982 Kirkpatrick made her claims about the genocide of Miskito Indians and the herding of others into "concentration camps." This was a reference to the relocation of Miskito, Sumu and Rama communities along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border and the characterization will be carefully deconstructed below. Similarly, in an address to the Organization of American States in February 1982, Reagan claimed that

Nicaragua's Indians were being massacred.[45] Additional accusations were made by then Secretary of State Alexander Haig who also produced a photograph on national television which he claimed showed the *Sandinistas* burning Indians. The picture was from the French paper Le Figaro and actually depicted the Red Cross burning bodies of people murdered by the National Guard during insurrections on the Pacific Coast in 1978.[46]

Not all charges of abuse were made by the United States policymakers. Within Nicaragua, the Nicaraguan Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement which criticized the relocations, calling them unnecessarily harsh. Moreover, in Honduras, the Minister of Defense accused the *Ejército Popular Sandinista* (EPS), the *Sandinista* army, of crossing the Honduran border and having massacred some 200 Miskitos. This was investigated within Honduras by the Honduran College of Education which found that "[T]he news of the massacre was totally false and no Miskito has been assassinated by the Sandinista Popular Army."[47] The majority of charges originated out of the United States and the specifics demand a closer examination.

On the MacNeil-Lehrer news hour in January 1982, then United States Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick claimed that the *Sandinista* abuses against the Miskitos were "more massive than any other human rights violations that I'm aware of in Central America today."[48] For this claim to be true, it should have been necessary for Kirkpatrick to demonstrate that Nicaragua was minimally worse than say its neighbours such as Guatemala and El Salvador or in South America, Chile, Peru and Argentina. These countries often received poor human rights reports. This approach of examining the regional context does not displace the claim that the *Sandinistas* violated human rights. Rather, examining the Latin American context dispells the notion that the *Sandinistas* actually represented the most exceptional and horrific cases of human rights abuse. Two examples demand highlighting as a way of dispelling the myth of *Sandinista* unprecendented terror: El Salvador and Guatemala. First, I look very briefly at these two countries and second, at the conditions within Nicaragua which sparked the charges by Kirkpatrick, Reagan, Haig and at least one of their neoconservative counterparts within Nicaragua, the Conference of Bishops.

---

[45] Brown, "Miskito Revindication," 185.

[46] Freeland, A Special Place, 54.

[47] Diario de las Americas (9 January, 1982); and Brown, "Miskito Revindication," 184.

In "Revolts in El Salvador and Guatemala," John Booth and Thomas W. Walker examined the conditions of two of Nicaragua's neighbours.[49] In El Salvador and Guatemala, both governments, supported by the Reagan Administration, were engaged in counterinsurgency campaigns against dissidents and armed revolutionary opposition movements. Booth and Walker pointed out that the price for indigenous Guatemalans of government repression and counterinsurgency campaigns was quite high. Between 1978 and 1982 deathsquad and military violence claimed tens of thousands of Guatemalans including prominent members of the political opposition: members of the Christian Democrats, the Democratic Socialists and the various parties comprising the United Front of the Revolution.[50] In 1982, it was estimated that some 303 political murders occurred *per month* in urban areas and this number was even higher in rural areas.[51] Kirkpatrick suppressed the extensive reportings on violence in Guatemala, El Salvador and Peru in news media such as The Christian Science Monitor and The Nation and in human rights reports. Thus, for example, in 1980, Peru led the world in the number of "disappeared" persons. Moreover, Guatemala and El Salvador had become like post-Vietnam laboratories for the testing of new counterinsurgency strategies. As I have noted, this examination of

---

[48] "How to Read the Reagan Administration: The Miskito Case," Envio (November, 1986), 22-23.

[49] Booth and Walker, Understanding Central America (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); also Washington Office on Latin America, "Who Pays the Price? The Cost of War in the Guatemalan Highlands" (Washington, D.C., April, 1988).

---

[50] Booth and Walker, Understanding Central America, 94; also Washington Office on Latin America, "Who Pays the Price? The Cost of War in the Guatemalan Highlands" (Washington, D.C., April, 1988).

[51] See Americas Watch, Human Rights in Guatemala: No Neutrals Allowed (New York: AW, 1982); Gordon L. Bowen, "The Origin of State Terrorism," in Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean, ed. D. Shultz and D. Graham (Boulder: Westview, 1984); John Booth, "A Guatemalan Nightmare: Levels of Political Violence, 1966-1972," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 22 (May), 195-225; and Inforpress Centroamerica, Central American Report (February 1, 1985), 31.

Guatemala and El Salvador is not intended to be a diversion from problems central to Nicaragua. Rather, it is intended to challenge the veracity of Kirkpatrick's claims. The picture Kirkpatrick's claim sought to paint was not only blurred; what it left out, obscured, deliberately hid is reflective of the fact of deception since the Reagan Administration had direct access to this information.

In El Salvador between 1980 and 1982 when Kirkpatrick made her claim, over 42,000 people had died as a consequence of deathsquad, paramilitary and military counterinsurgency. In 1980 Salvadorean national guardsmen tortured and murdered three nuns and a lay worker from the United States.[52] In March 1980 Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated while giving mass. The murder was tied to *Contra* leader Ricardo Lau who had been paid by Salvadoran security, the *Organización Democratica Nacionalista* (ORDEN).[53] The previous day Romero had called upon the Salvadorean military to stop killing fellow countrymen. His appeal was silenced. Another 30,000 Salvadoreans died between 1982 and 1987 and the decline from 42,000 between 1980 and 1982 is partly attributed to the consistent international attention and protests from human rights groups, not the United States government. The Salvadoran military, police and the paramilitary forces tied to Salvadoran security, were responsible for 80 per cent of these deaths.[54] The United States aid continued and in November 1989 six Jesuits, their female housekeeper and her daughter, were assassinated by Colonel Benavides and Lieutenant Yusshy Mendoza from the elite Salvadoran troops trained by the United States. A United Nations tribunal identified Defense Minister General René Emilio Ponce and five senior military officers as the ones responsible for issuing the order on the grounds that the Jesuits were behind the *Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional* insurgency against the government.[55] This led, to no avail, to renewed calls for the end of Reagan Administration military aid to El Salvador.

---

[52] Reuter, "Salvadoran officers jailed in slaying Jesuit priests released," The Edmonton Journal (April 2, 1993), A5.

[53] Christopher Dickey, With the Contras (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985); and Sam Dillon, Commandos: The CIA and Nicaragua's Contra Rebels (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1991), 64, 341n6.

By January 1992 when a negotiated settlement had been achieved, over 75,000 were dead, one million displaced and the Salvadorean military had received five billion in United States military aid. In the context of these studies and reports, if Kirkpatrick's claim had been true, it would have meant something like wholesale slaughter in Nicaragua and, truly, a wanton disregard for human life. It seems almost trite, even if true, to say there were no similar reports to support this kind of violence between the *Sandinistas* and the Miskitos.

A second and related claim made by Kirkpatrick was that there were some 250,000 Miskitos who were being subjected to this massive human rights abuse. If this were true, given the rate in Guatemala of some 303 deaths per month, then there would have had to be something like 3,600 Miskitos dying per year in Nicaragua, and at this rate, the Miskitos would have been wiped out within ten to fifteen years. However, Kirkpatrick was engaged in a classic case of disinformation and fragmentation. The figure of 250,000 was three times larger than the entire Miskito population of about 80,000. Moreover, this number of 80,000 included some of those Miskitos who lived either part-time or full-time in Honduras.[56]

---

[54] Booth and Walker, Understanding Central America, 85.

[55] Reuter, "Salvadoran officers jailed in slaying of Jesuit priests released," The Edmonton Journal (April 2, 1993), A5.

This inflation of the number of Miskitos suggests one of two things. Kirkpatrick either deliberately collapsed all the ethnic groups on the Atlantic Coast into one undifferentiated mass which she then called Miskitos or, despite knowledge of the differences and the number of Miskitos, she chose to exaggerate the number. In the first instance the collapse of indigenous and ethnic identities point to a deliberate strategy of fragmentation and the resulting obscuration of the Sumus, Ramas, Creoles, Garífunas, Chinese and Mestizos. In the second instance, the exaggeration complemented the overall disinformation campaign of discrediting the *Sandinistas*. In either case, the homogenizing information was wrong and misleading.

To put Kirkpatrick's numbers into a more accurate Nicaraguan context, the *costeños* comprised anywhere from 250,000 to 280,000 or about nine to ten per cent of the national population.[57] By 1985 there were indeed some 250,000 Nicaraguans from *all the rural areas* and the Atlantic Coast who were displaced by the war. About 79,000 of these were resettled in other rural areas called *asentamientos*.[58] What Kirkpatrick also chose to ignore was the context for the forced relocations, most significantly the *Contra*/revolution. Despite the falsifiability of Kirkpatrick's "facts," this relevant information was not advanced, and thus further disinformation entered the marketplace of ideas about the *Contra*/revolution. Perhaps one of the extraordinary features of these disinformation campaigns was the boldness of those responsible for its dissemination. In 1982 Kirkpatrick was bold enough to dismiss the truth and simply misinform United States citizens. This audacity made the disinformation campaigns all the more effective, especially when coupled with the fact that false information was frequently repeated, by different policymakers and in varied forums.

---

[56] Autonomy Commission, "Principles and Policies for the Exercise of the Right to Autonomy by the Indigenous Peoples and Communities of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua" in Autonomy (Managua, July, 1985), 46.

---

[57] Armand Mattelart placed the population at about 285,200 with 70,000 being Miskito in "Trabil Nani: Historical Background," Communicating in Popular Nicaragua (New York and Bagnolet, France: International General, 1986), 122; Philippe Bourgois placed the total ethnic population at 256,700 with 67,000 being Miskito in "Nicaragua's Ethnic Minorities in the Revolution," Monthly Review 36, 8 (January, 1985), 23; and using 1982 estimates Vilas placed it at 271,751 with 66,994 being Miskito in State, Class & Ethnicity, 4.

[58] Maria Florez-Estrada, "Y trajeron la guerra," Pensamiento Propio 4, 35 (August, 1986), 60; and John L. Hammond, "Resettlement and Rural Development in Nicaragua," Monthly Review 41, 5 (October, 1989), 22.

False information was often disseminated and repeated by Reagan. In a televised address to the nation on May 9, 1984 entitled "U.S. Interests in Central America," Reagan claimed that there was a *Sandinista* "attempt to wipe out an entire culture, the Miskito Indians, thousands of whom have been slaughtered or herded into detention camps where they have been starved and abused. Their villages, churches, and crops have been burned."[59] It was true, as Reagan claimed, that the *Sandinistas* burned the property of the Miskitos (as well as of Sumus and Mestizos) along the Río Coco and the Honduran border after relocating them. The remainder of the claims were false. Again, these claims were characterized by the absence of a context, namely the violent and disruptive nature of the *Contra*/revolution.

There was a complicated web of events, mostly related to the armed *Contra* battles being waged in the area which resulted in January 1982 in the forced relocations. As I have stated, the resettlements were represented by the Reagan Administration as the placement in "concentration camps."[60] In doing so they invoked the analogy of Hitler's genocide against the Jews who were the immense majority of those persons targeted, actually interned in concentration camps and eventually exterminated. It is no doubt a cynical but true claim that Reagan's invoking of the holocaust was not meant to recall to memory the experiences of the many foreigners, the (dis)abled and homosexuals persecuted during the Nazi genocide. This kind of selective representation of historical experiences always should be examined carefully. Analogical reasoning can confuse as well as clarify and in this case it confounded the understanding.

---

[59] Reagan, "U.S. Interests in Central America" (May 9, 1984) in Realism, Strength, Negotiation: Key Foreign Policy Statements of the Reagan Administration (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, May, 1984), 135.

[60] "How to Read the Reagan Administration," Envio (November, 1986), 23.

The relocations within Nicaragua resulted in various human rights reports as well as critical responses from international Indian groups, international human rights groups and the Moravian Church. Almost without exception, these studies found the Reagan Administration's claims to be distortions, exaggerations or outright lies. As emphasized earlier, this was the crux of events leading to a deteriorated *Sandinista*-Miskito relationship. First, the events will be detailed, followed by a critical analysis of the investigative reports.

V.5. Precursor to Forced Relocation

There were several factors and events which culminated in the relocations. The most immediate were the *Contra* attacks originating from across the Honduran border between November and December 1981. There were, however, other contributing factors, including, as I discussed in the preceding section, the tensions between the *Sandinistas* and the peoples of the area which partly were rooted in the government's nationalistic ideology and cultural insensitivity. It also was rooted in the separatism of some indigenous leaders. Tensions between some Miskito leaders (known as *caciques*) such as Steadman Fagoth Müller and the *Sandinistas* reached an impasse in mid-1981. Thus it is important to review briefly these disagreements.

On February 28, *Sandinista* soldiers entered the Moravian Church in Prinzapolka on the Atlantic Coast with the intent of arresting two Miskito leaders. The confrontation resulted in the soldiers killing four Miskitos. The parishioners retaliated and killed four soldiers.[61] Fagoth, a prominent Miskito leader, was arrested in Managua and some 32 other leaders from the group *Misurasata* were arrested on the Atlantic Coast. They were accused of counter-revolutionary agitation. The group *Misurasata*, meaning Miskitos, Sumus, Ramas and Sandinistas Working Together, had been formed in order to facilitate the relations between the central government and the indigenous peoples on the Atlantic Coast. As a result, Fagoth had become a representative in the Nicaraguan Council of State and another Miskito leader, Brooklyn Rivera, had become regional coordinator. In 1980 when relations between the *Sandinistas* and the indigenous peoples were being forged, *Misurasata's* indigenous representatives proposed what seemed like a desire for integration:

---

[61] Brown, "Miskito Revindication," 182.

> ...we struggle for the genuine integration of our population into national life. An integration which means development and progress for our own people, without impositions on the part of dominant groups, with the basic rights to create our own means of culture, linguistic, social, religious, economic, and political expression.[62]

The issue then seemed to be over *how* integration occurred and whether there would be a respect for minority differences as opposed to whether integration should occur at all. However, over time the mostly Miskito leaders of *Misurasata* became more separatist and this was partly influenced by the Fourth Worldist ideology increasingly adopted by indigenous groups in the Americas especially. According to Fourth Worldist conceptualizations, indigenous peoples worldwide represent a separate and "fourth" world as compared to the first (western), second (socialist) and third (non-western and/or non-aligned) worlds. Its distinctive nature was in the shared experiences of poverty, repression and continuing subjugation experienced by indigenous peoples under varied ideological systems since conquest and colonization. One of the principal intellectual articulations of this has been made by United States anthropologist Bernard Nietschmann who became an advisor to Brooklyn Rivera during negotiations with the *Sandinistas*, as well as in discussions with the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples. As

---

[62] Vilas, Class, State & Ethnicity, 106.

Nietschmann articulates it, Fourth Worldist ideology is a distinct *neoindigenismo* perspective which is "not from the Right, nor from the Left; it is Indian."[63] Based on this, Miskito leaders began to demand separation from Nicaragua, not fair integration. Ultimately ethnic militancy and *Sandinista* nationalism resulted in tensions which were compounded in 1981 by the arrests and imprisonment of indigenous leaders. Throughout the Coast, the imprisonments were protested. In Waspan there was a two-month vigil attended by Miskitos whose numbers varied from 200 to 1,000 people. There were demonstrations on the grounds of the Catholic and Moravian Churches in Waspan and Puerto Cabezas until most of the Miskito leaders were released.[64]

Fagoth was released on May 7, 1981 on conditional parole, namely that he would accept a scholarship to study abroad in either Bulgaria or the Soviet Union. Fagoth interpreted this as an attempt to make him into an atheist and a communist. The main reason for his arrest, and one which differentiated him from other Miskito leaders, was that the *Sandinistas'* review of Somoza's files had revealed that Fagoth had been an informer for Somoza.[65] Using the pseudonym Saul

---

[63] Hector Diaz-Polanco, "Neoindigenismo and the Ethnic Question in Central America," trans. Kelley Swarthout, Latin American Perspectives, Issue 52, 14, 1 (Winter, 1987), 87-100; and Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, "Indigenous Rights and Regional Autonomy in Revolutionary Nicaragua," Latin American Perspective, Issue 52, 14, 1 (Winter, 1987), 43-66.

[64] Brown, "Miskito Revindication," 182.

[65] Brown, "Miskito Revindication," 182-183.

Torres, Fagoth had infiltrated the student movement and fed information to the National Guard. As part of "Plan 81," he continued to engage in subversive activities to try and destabilize the *Sandinista* government. Where revolutionary activists on the Pacific Coast were horrified by Fagoth's preemptory counterrevolutionary activities, people on the Atlantic Coast were indifferent or at least not similarly affected for several reasons which will be discussed later. What is important to note at this point is that in June 1981 Fagoth fled Nicaragua for Honduras along with some 3,000 other Miskitos.

In Honduras Fagoth declared a "Holy War" against the *Sandinistas* and called upon the indigenous peoples to revolt in order to gain their quest for full regional autonomy. This began the indigenous participation in armed opposition to the *Sandinistas*. He formed the group *Misura* (Alliance of Miskitos, Sumus and Ramas) and aligned himself with the principal *Contra* group in Honduras, the *Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense* (FDN) led by a former Somoza National Guardsman Colonel Enríquez Bermúdez. In 1982 there was widespread reporting of *Misura's* abuses by human rights groups including the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, Americas Watch and Amnesty International. These reports documented cases of "torture, kidnap, murder of civilians, including women and children, forcible recruitment and preventing Miskitos, by intimidation from returning [to Nicaragua]."[66] These pervasive abuses were ignored or hidden by the Reagan Administration.

In September 1981 Brooklyn Rivera, along with other members of *Misurasata,* left Nicaragua for Honduras. He became *Misura's* second-in-command to Fagoth. However, when Fagoth aligned *Misura* with the FDN, Rivera left Honduras and eventually ended up in Costa Rica. There he aligned himself with the *Contra* group *Alianza Revolucionaria Democratica Ejército* (ARDE) led by former *Sandinista* Edén Pastora Gómez.[67] Jane Freeland pointed out that like *Misura,* Rivera's group, which maintained the name *Misurasata,* also became engaged in pressure tactics and abuse against those Miskitos who opposed the resort to arms and the resulting escalation of tensions.

Within Nicaragua, the *Sandinistas* terminated *Misurasata's* official recognition as a representative voice for indigenous peoples in the autonomy discussions. The departures of *caciques* were paralleled by armed attacks in the Río Coco communities, especially along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border.[68] As Charles R. Hale pointed out, Nicaraguan nationalism had come head to head with "ethnic militancy" and some demands from the Atlantic Coast for complete regional autonomy based on separate histories, ethnicities, cultures and languages.[69] Ironically, the latter was made feasible precisely because there was a revolution which opened a space for such demands to be articulated and realized. This was initially acknowledged by both Fagoth and Rivera.

---

[66] Freeland, A Special Place, 60.

[67] Freeland, A Special Place, 61.

[68] "Chronology of Key Events in the Atlantic Coast, 1979-1989," Envío 8, 93 (April, 1989), 30.

The historical roots of these ideological tensions, as briefly illuminated, are complex and go much further than this present discussion allows. The roots of distrust certainly have an important history which preceeded the *Sandinistas'* triumph. This historical context includes divergent ethnicities and experiences; it will be expanded in the following chapters. Such information is useful for those researchers interested in contextualizing the complexity of identity politics at various historical conjunctures. For the moment, the *Contra* attacks were the dominant context in which relocations occurred. It was also the dominant context through which information was filtered. Thus, it is best to provide a careful analysis here.

Between November and December 1981, the *Contras* in Honduras, in conjunction with Fagoth's *Misura*, launched what has been called "Red December" or "Red Christmas."[70] The latter was a two-month long attack staged by *Misura* in conjunction with the FDN. It should be noted that although the group was called *Misura*, meaning Miskito, Sumu and Rama Indians, it was comprised largely of Miskitos loyal to Fagoth. Tensions heightened in December 1981 when *Sandinista* soldiers killed some twelve Miskitos apparently because they had been responsible for killing seven *Sandinista* militia. The suspicion around this act, seen as a retaliation, persisted for many years. It did not endear the *Sandinistas* to Miskitos and certainly fed into any suspicions which had been planted by *Misura* propaganda.

---

[69] Hale, "Miskitú: Revolution in the Revolution," NACLA Report on the Americas XXV, 3 (December, 1990), 24-28.

[70] Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, The Central American Fact Book (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1986), 280.

The political-military intent of Red December was first to capture Puerto Cabezas, declare it a liberated zone and then ask for international recognition which the United States would proffer. Then from Puerto Cabezas, *Misura* and the FDN would have launched a full-scale assault against the revolutionary regime in Managua. This did not happen in material terms; however, psychologically the confusion created was disadvantageous to the *Sandinistas*. The battles eventually claimed the lives of some 60 Indians and *Sandinistas* soldiers combined.[71] In particular, Miskitos who collaborated with the *Sandinistas* were targeted and subjected to "gruesome deaths."[72] To a significant extent the area became lost to *Sandinistas'* efforts of diplomacy, at least until several years later.

There was another strategy launched simultaneously and it was intended to be, and was, a cynical prey upon the human psyche. In

---

[71] Brown, "Miskito Revindication," 184.

[72] "From Separation to Autonomy," Envío (April, 1989), 37.

November, the Légion's radio station "September 15," in collaboration with Fagoth, broadcast that the *Sandinistas* were descending upon the indigenous villages to bomb them.[73] The broadcast alleged that the rationale for the impending bombing was the *Sandinistas'* belief that the Miskitos had revolted or were going to revolt. This tactic of disinformation resulted in sheer panic which was heightened by simultaneous armed attacks of villages along the border. The situation was exacerbated starting in January 1982 and into 1983 when, without negotiations, the *Sandinistas* forced 39 villages encompassing 22,000 Miskitos, Sumus and Mestizos to relocate away from the Río Coco border.[74] Thus some 12,000 Miskitos as well as another 10,000 Sumus and Mestizos were uprooted from their homes and relocated 50 miles south to an area called *Tasba Pri* or "Free Land."[75] Only about 8,500 of the Miskitos eventually relocated; a significant number fled across the border to Honduras, becoming refugees.[76]

In March 1982 *Misura* used a number of methods including anti-*Sandinista* propaganda and force to relocate almost the entire Sumu community of Musan (1,600) to Honduras.[77] In July of that year, the military ante was upped when the United States began the first of a number of joint maneuvers with the Honduran military. In September 1982 Rivera's *Misurasata* declared itself an armed opposition to the *Sandinistas*. A significant consequence of these activities was that many of the Miskitos from the Río Coco area and Sumus from Musawas became the displaced refugees and victims of campaigns of psychological warfare. When those who were victims of Red December are combined with the Miskitos who chose to cross the border and take up arms against the government for political reasons, as well as those who ended up being displaced because their homeland became a war zone, the havoc on the Coast comes into sharper focus.

---

[73] Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, "Indigenous Rights and Regional Autonomy in Revolutionary Nicaragua," Latin American Perspectives 14, 1 (Winter, 1987), 50-51.

[74] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 280; Hammond, "Resettlement," 22.

[75] Bourgois, "Nicaragua's Ethnic Minorities," 26.

[76] "How to Read the Reagan Administration," Envío (November, 1986), 23.

The *Sandinista* rationale was to remove the Miskitos from what was fast becoming a war zone. The *Contras* would attack and escape under cover of civilian villages. It was also a preemptory move to counter *Contra* scare tactics which attempted to compel Miskitos to join the *Contras*. While some of the reasons constituted defensible grounds, the relocations were problematic for at least two reasons. First, the forced relocations denied the Miskitos' autonomy over their own lives, and second, the architects of the plan displayed a remarkable disregard and/or ignorance of the Miskitos and Sumus' cultural attachment to their land and way of life. To some degree, the hubris with which the *Sandinistas* conducted this process might have originated out of their ignorance and fear of the Miskitos; they were an unknown and the *Sandinistas* were not confident that they could be trusted.

---

[77] "Chronology of Key Events," Envío (April, 1989), 30.

Second, as the *Sandinistas* withdrew from the areas, they burned homes and property to deny the *Contra* access and use. This is a standard military strategy but certainly not one which was conducive to endearing the new *Sandinista* government to the indigenous peoples. This was also problematic because peoples' homes and livelihoods were destroyed without consent, collaboration or even cooptation. The *Sandinistas* had not negotiated transfer of property and compensation nor had they given the Miskitos the benefit of the doubt by at least explaining their policy. They ultimately admitted their "cultural insensitivity," made reparations and in the mid and late 1980s, facilitated the return of many indigenous communities to their traditional habitats, especially along the Río Coco. Nevertheless, these early acts were to haunt them into the mid-1980's within Nicaragua and were amply exploited internationally throughout the entire Reagan Administration.

This experience proved more than ever the fact that first impressions are lasting ones. The best known claims are those presented by Reagan, Kirkpatrick and conservatives such as Schlafly despite the multiple repudiations.[78] Human rights observers such as Americas Watch found that the events of Red Christmas "provided reasonable grounds for the decision to evacuate the border area."[79] The *Sandinistas* were, however, placed at fault by Americas Watch for the abrupt manner in which they conducted the relocations. The Americas Watch Committee which investigated the charges of massacre and genocide also interviewed Fagoth, especially concerning his most serious charge that some 40-50 workers in the mining area of Leimus had been shot, drowned or buried alive. When interviewed, Fagoth had no specifics to proffer and there was also no corroboration from other sources. Thus the Committee reported that:

---

[78] See also United States journalists J.H. Evans and Jack Epstein, "Nicaragua's Miskito Move Based on False Allegations," National Catholic Reporter (24 December, 1982).

> We uncovered no information which tended to confirm the Fagoth accounts...In fact those who seemed to us most credible denied any widespread disappearances and told us they had no specific information as to the alleged torture and killing of Miskitos during the relocations.[80]

Similarly, while the Moravian Church, the dominant institutionalized religion among indigenous peoples, lamented the move 50 miles into the interior of Nicaragua, it concluded that "given the situation [*Contra* attacks] in the area, it is impossible to live in peace. We support our government in the work of evacuation and the efforts to normalize activities in the region as a whole."[81]

---

[79] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 280.

[80] Americas Watch Report (1-10 March, 1982); Brown, "Miskito Revindication," 185.

The International Indian Treaty Council, in its assessment of the indigenous situation, acknowledged that the *Sandinistas* provided transportation, health care and arable farm lands for the Miskitos' use. As well, the elderly and pregnant women were airlifted out of the area. However, they found the *Contras'* exploitation of the Miskitos' vulnerability on the border, and the later United States campaign of disinformation, to be objectionable: "Our greatest concern is for those Miskitos who have been manipulated into crossing the border and are now being used by anti-government forces."[82] In conceptualizing the *Contra* "use" of Miskitos as a calculated manipulation of Indian vulnerability, the Council continued by recalling to memory "the minorities who were used by the CIA in Laos and Vietnam, and who later became outcasts among their own people once the CIA didn't need them any more."[83] The Council's report gave voice to the sentiments of a number of indigenous peoples who did not want to get caught up in the cross-fire between the *Contras*, the CIA and the *Sandinistas*.

In July 1985, in its report entitled Human Rights in Nicaragua: Reagan, Rhetoric and Reality, Americas Watch found that there was no evidence to validate the claims made by the Reagan Administration that the *Sandinistas* condoned violence against the indigenous peoples. Moreover, Amnesty International's Report of March 1986 found that "[T]here never has been evidence of racially-motivated or widespread killing of Miskitos" as claimed by the Reagan Administration.[84] Much of the Reagan Administration's claims constituted disinformation. This leads to a consideration of other strategies of largely successful disinformation targetted primarily at United States citizens and the Congress.

---

[81] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 280; International Justice Fund, "Report on the Relocation of Miskito Indians by the Nicaraguan Government" (Los Angeles: National Center for Immigrant's Rights, 1984).

[82] International Justice Fund, "Report on the Relocation," 27.

[83] International Justice Fund, "Report on the Relocation," 27.

V.6. Marxist Indoctrination?

Another strategy of the Reagan Administration and conservatives within the United States was to paint the conflict as centred in the Marxist ideology of the *Sandinistas*. This construct overshadowed a more plausible conceptualization, namely a conflict between a nationalist central government militantly committed to protecting the sovereign integrity of the Nicaraguan nation-state, and regionally and culturally distinct "nations" or peoples. In effect, the Nicaraguan nation-state confronted the Indian nations and ethnic peoples who were determined to be self-determining. No major United States foreign policymaker articulated this indigenous quest for autonomy, especially as distinct from the *Contras'* efforts to overthrow the *Sandinista* government. Thus the heart of the indigenous struggle was almost completely subsumed under the anti-communist counterrevolutionary rhetoric.

---

[84] "How to Read the Reagan Administration," Envío (November, 1986), 22.

Disinformation was effective by virtue of repetition. On April 15, 1985 at a fundraising gathering for Nicaraguan *Contras*, Reagan claimed, "[A]s you know, the Miskitos supported the Sandinistas against Somoza. But shortly after taking power, the Sandinistas attempted to indoctrinate the Miskitos in Marxist dogma."[85] Reagan went on to say that "[T]he Indians resisted so much the Sandinistas labeled them 'bourgeois' and therefore, enemies of the people. They began to arrest Indian leaders. Some were murdered, some were tortured."[86] This latter claim related to the arrest of Miskito leaders including, as I have discussed, Fagoth who was later released on provisional parole. Fagoth violated this when he crossed the border and became instrumental in the indigenous armed opposition from Honduras. No evidence was proffered to support the allegations of murder or torture. Nevertheless, prominent conservatives repeated the allegations.

One instance of this repetition occurred when Phyllis Schlafly wrote almost verbatim the claims made by Reagan without checking their veracity. Schlafly, a vocal conservative, is perhaps best known for her 1960s and 1970s opposition to bussing black children into "white schools" and her group's (STOP ERA) efforts to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution; she was also an ardent supporter of both the Reagan Administration and the *Contras* in the 1980s. Her repetition of the above noted speech by Reagan was so close that under any other circumstances it might have been plagarism. In an article in 1985 Schlafly wrote that "[T]he Miskitos supported the Sandinistas against the previous ruler, Somoza, but that did not save them from becoming victims of Communists."[87] She goes on to say that the collaboration between the Miskitos and the *Sandinistas* deteriorated "after they [Miskitos] resisted Marxist indoctrination." She further claimed that the *Sandinistas* labelled the Miskitos "bourgeois" for not continuing the collaboration.

---

[85] "How to Read the Reagan Administrattion," Envío (November, 1986), 20-35.

[86] "How to Read the Reagan Administration," Envío (November, 1986), 23.

The purpose of Reagan's speech and Schlafly's article was, in the words of Richard Shaull and Nancy John, to construct the *Sandinistas* as a "stereotypical Marxist-Leninist monolith."[88] There are several relevant facts which are simply ignored in these claims and the story as told. First, the mechanics of the matter: the Nicaraguan Revolution did not encompass the Atlantic Coast and the *Sandinistas* were quite ignorant of the profound cultural, linguistic and political differences which existed, except theoretically.[89] They thought they could simply "integrate" the indigenous population into the general fabric of Nicaraguan society, and that the indigenous population would be grateful. Ironically, the 1969 Historic Program indentified FSLN intentions for the indigenous peoples as one of integration into the Nicaraguan nation-state. Although the *Sandinistas* might have had good intentions, the *Sandinistas'* initial encounters with the *costeños* were heavily overlaid with paternalism which did not escape the indigenous population. The *Sandinistas'* idea of "integrating" the indigenous peoples into the Revolution was interpreted as Spanish ethnocentrism and revolutionary chauvinism.

---

[87] Schlafly, The Phyllis Schlafly Report (August, 1985), 1-3.

[88] Shaull and John, Responding to the Cry of the Poor: Nicaragua and the United States (Philadelphia, PA.: American Friends Service Committee, 1986), 56.

Second, there was a matter of logistics and geography which prohibited extensive *costeño* participation. There was no easy route connecting the two coasts. During the Somoza dictatorships, communication and trade were mostly maintained by air or sea such that any kind of sustained political and military collaboration between the two coasts was virtually non-existent. The construction of an all-weather highway between the two coasts (Puerto Cabezas-Waslala-Siuna) was not completed until 1982.[90] Further, there were no direct telephone lines between the two coasts until

---

[89] For e.g. the often cited support for indigenous interests in the FSLN's 1969 Historic Program which outlines five articles. See, "The Historic Program of the FSLN," in Tomas Borge, Carlos Fonseca, Daniel Ortega, Humberto Ortega, and Jaime Wheelock, Sandinistas Speak (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1982), 13-22, esp. Section VI entitled "Reincorporation of the Atlantic Coast," 19.

[90] Freeland, A Special Place, 94.

1982 when one was constructed between Bluefields and Managua. Moreover, unless one flew on irregularly scheduled flights, to get from the Coast to Managua took six hours by boat from Rama City and another four by vehicle.

A third problem with the Reagan and Schafly conceptualization of *Sandinista*-Miskito problems is the not so simple matter of interpersonal communication. There was little collaboration for a very obvious reason: with few exceptions the Miskitos spoke only Miskito and if there was a second language, it was probably the *ligua franca* of the area, Creole English. Most *Sandinista* leaders spoke Spanish exclusively, although *Commandantes* such as Tomas Borge quickly applied themselves to master Miskito. As obvious as these facts were, they were readily overlooked by those who were simply content to believe whatever they were told by the Reagan Administration. For some observers without access to alternative sources for the proliferation of contradictory information, they were genuinely, and not surprisingly, disinformed by events as they were misconstrued. Of course, there were some who knew the problematic nature of the claims but saw them as justified given the overall objective of toppling the *Sandinistas*. Arguably, this included many of those who comprised the neoconservative intelligensia supporting the Reagan Administration against the "evil empire," by whatever means necessary.

Interestingly, Reagan and Schlafly assumed the *Sandinistas* were in fact ignorant of Marxism, or that the average United States audience consuming this intended disinformation would be ignorant of the details. To some degree, they were right since most social scientists do not give serious attention to Marxism because it is considered by them to be an optional specialty, a dogmatic political creed or simply an eccentricity. This is partly due to the fallacy of associating Marxism with a nation-state such as the former Soviet Union and even today with China or Cuba, despite profound differences among them. In any event, both Reagan and Schlafly suggested the *Sandinistas* confused the indigenous peoples -- those presumed oppressed -- with the oppressors. It was truly a leap of ideological faith to believe that Marxists would mistake any indigenous people with the bourgeois. Arguably it was ignorance of Nicaraguan geo-political history, but also ignorance of the indigenous peoples which allowed this kind of claim to be made and repeated. It was also ignorance coupled with incessant disinformation which allowed this confusion to hold sway at least throughout much of the *Contra*/revolution. No doubt, disinformation was not intended to improve knowledge about the Miskitos or their aspirations. It certainly erased from discussion the interests and pursuits of the "other" ethnic groups which remained invisible throughout the armed hostilities.

This critical inquiry leads to the examination of another problematic construct of the Reagan Administration, that of accusing the *Sandinistas* of religious persecution on par with the Jewish experiences during the Third Reich. In the following section I also examine the religious context in Nicaragua, especially the church-state relations.

V.7. Disinformation and Religious Identities

Reagan often claimed that "[T]he Nicaraguan people are trapped in a totalitarian dungeon" and that the *Sandinistas* had "rendered the democratic freedoms of speech, press and assembly punishable by officially sanctioned harrassment, and imprisonment or death."[91] In this litany of alleged repressions, Reagan also claimed that the *Sandinistas* "smuggled drugs into the United States and persecuted Catholics and Jews."[92] Nicaragua was constructed as illiberal and repressive. Further, in a manner bordering on pontification, Reagan claimed that the *Sandinistas* belonged to "a confederation of terrorist states" which included Libya, Iran, North Korea and Cuba, but additionally, unlike all these other states, Nicaragua under the

---

[91] Al Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom: The United States in Nicaragua 1909-1988 (Rolling Bay, Washington: Sea Otter Press, 1988), 90-92.

[92] Reed Brody, Contra Terror in Nicaragua, Report of a Fact-finding Mission (Boston: South End Press, 1985), 3-4; and Robert Matthews, "Sowing Dragon's Teeth: The U.S. War Against Nicaragua," NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August, 1986), 13.

Sandinistas was the worst state since the Third Reich.[93]

The dominant foreign policymakers of the Reagan Administration attempted to construct Nicaragua as an exceptional case, as parallel only with one of recent history's most horrific examples of tyranny and genocide: Nazi Germany. Next, I examine the claims concerning "religious" persecution, which were usually synonomous with Catholic persecution. However, at opportune moments Jewish persecution was alleged as a way of swaying public sentiment within the United States. Given the probability of anti-Semitism among the general public, or simple indifference to non-Christians within the United States, it is reasonable to think that those who were targetted represented primarily, although not exclusively, the "Jewish public."

The Reagan Administration policymakers' accusations of religious persecution were mirrored by similar sentiments expressed within Nicaragua, especially by the more conservative elements in the Catholic Church hierarchy: Cardinal Obando y Bravo, Bishop Pablo Vega and Reverend Bismarck Carballo. Nicaraguan Cardinal Obando y Bravo emphatically stated that, "[W]e want to state clearly that this government is totalitarian. We are dealing with an enemy of the Church."[94] This kind of claim was echoed in the United States by Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs Elliot Abrams who accused the *Sandinistas* of repeated harassment of Catholic priests. One such story repeated by Abrams was of an "unfortunate priest who was forced to disrobe at gunpoint by Sandinista police and was marched naked through the streets of Managua to jail."[95] If indeed this had happened, it would have been an unconscionable act of indignity and at least one instance of objectionable harassment of a Catholic priest.

---

[93] The New York Times (March 17, 1986).

[94] The New York Times (March 17, 1986).

The priest about whom Abrams spoke was one Reverend Bismarck Carballo. A different story from that of Abrams was reported by others. Jaime Peinado argued that the Reagan Administration's focus on religious persecution was but another fabricated attempt to discredit the *Sandinista* government. Apparently, "[T]he police did not force Carballo to disrobe. He was in that state when they found him. But what the police did do was save his life from the outraged, pistol-wielding boyfriend of the young woman Carballo was visiting."[96] Removing a scantily-clad priest from "a little indiscretion" is markedly different from compelling him to undress. Subsequently photographs of the naked Carballo were printed in Nicaragua's three daily newspapers: El Nuevo Diario, Barricada and La Prensa. It was a matter of public debate how they got there. However, there was at least one possibility besides the *Sandinistas*. According to Philip Zwerling and Connie Martin, a television crew covering demonstrations at the Venezuelan Embassy in the Las Colinas neighbourhood of Managua saw a naked man running down the street with another armed man pursuing him; both men were captured on film and both were taken into custody. Further, Philip Zwerling pointed out that "[T]he naked man turned out to be Father Carballo. His pursuer told police that he had returned home and found the priest in bed with his wife and was seeking revenge."[97] In contrast, in his report, Carballo claimed he was making a routine pastoral call after which he was apprehended, stripped and beaten by the Managua police.

---

[95] Abrams, "The Silence in Nicaragua," The Washington Post (22 August, 1982).

[96] Philadelphia Daily News cited in Jaime Peinado, "Discrediting Nicaragua: The U.S Takes Aim at Religion," Nicaraguan Perspectives (Winter, 1983); also Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 90.

Confrontational relations between the government and fundamentally conservative priests were not exclusively over religion: it was an ideological struggle for power and authority over the hearts and minds of ordinary Nicaraguan citizens. This struggle is best examined by contextualizing state-church relations. In any event, Bishop Vega's religious (political-ideological) opposition to the *Sandinistas* frequently was expressed within Nicaragua and in various international forums. In 1986, while outside of Nicaragua and publicly lobbying the United States and Europe for aid to the *Contras*, Carballo and another priest Bishop Pablo Vega were expelled by the *Sandinistas*. This expulsion seemed to confirm the Administration's position that the *Sandinistas* were indeed targetting Catholic priests. However, during a lecture circuit in Washington, Bishop Vega had actively lobbied for United States support for the *Contras*. In one instance, Bishop Vega told his listeners that "the great dilemma of the Nicaraguan church is how to get military support to free people instead of oppressing them, as is happening now."[98] His surreptitious reference to military aid already being received by the *Sandinistas* was concerned primarily with the Soviet Union and obscured the significant economic and military aid received from Europe including France and what was then West Germany.[99] In fact in 1983 alone France sold Nicaragua 11 million dollars worth of arms.[100]

---

[97] Philip Zwerling and Connie Martin, Nicaragua: A New Kind of Revolution (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1985), 13-14. See also Zwerling's interview with Carballo (12-20).

There were other aspects to the history of church-state relations which need to be seen in their historical context. In part, the issue concerned whether notions of religious freedom included permitting the church hierarchy to incite foreign intervention or whether this incitement constituted an act of treason, especially given the conditions of war. In most cases, war itself is used to justify censorship. This was seen in the case of Britain during the Falkland Islands war, the United States during the invasion of Grenada and even the bombing of Libya, and the Soviet Union after the invitation/invasion in Afghanistan.[101] All of these interventions and the accompanying censorship of media coverage occurred between the early to mid-1980s, precisely the period of the *Contra*/revolution. If in Nicaragua under war-time conditions similar limits on the media and speech could not be imposed, if in fact they are understood as unjustifiable, then this would constitute an international double standard: it did.

---

[98] Joseph Mulligan, S.J., "Nicaraguan Bishops Continue Opposition Role: Other Catholics Support Sandinista Government," Occasional Paper of the Central American Historical Institute (Managua, March 1986).

[99] Jane Deighton, Rossana Horsley, Sarah Stewart & Cathy Cain, Sweet Ramparts: Women in Revolutionary Nicaragua (London: Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, 1983), 11-15; Latin American Weekly Report (12 November, 1982); Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 82-83.

[100] The Amanecida Collective, Revolutionary Forgiveness: Feminist Reflection on Nicaragua (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987), 14.

In September 1985 during a visit to Bonn, Bishop Vega was instrumental in persuading the West German government to terminate financial aid to the *Sandinistas*. At the time Carballo was on an extensive tour which had included France, Italy, Holland and the United States. During these trips he had lectured and lobbied against the *Sandinista* government. As he boarded the plane in Miami to return to Nicaragua, he learned the airline had orders not to allow his deplaning on Nicaraguan soil.[102] In defending the policy, Nicaraguan National Directorate member Bayardo Arce stated on July 1, 1986 that the government was no longer prepared to allow the declaration of, and support for, aggression against Nicaragua in the

---

[101] Bob Woodward, Veil: The Secret Wars of The CIA 1981-1987 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 78-79, 212, 287-295, 316-18.

[102] "Church-State Relations: A Chronology, Part I," Envío 6, 77 (November, 1987), 40.

"name of freedom of expression."[103] Thus the government imposed limits in the interests of "national security," a concept frequently deployed by Reagan. Were these priests a threat to the internal security of Nicaragua and was the *Sandinistas'* position justified? Their actions warrant further analysis.

The support of the church hierarchy for the *Contras* could implicitly and explicitly be read into their multiple visits to Washington during *Contra* debate. Cardinal Obando wrote an article which was published as an Op-ed in the Washington Post on May 12, 1986. He referred to the Nicaraguan government as a "terrible dictatorship" which frequently violated human rights. His reason given for only surreptitiously supporting the *Contras* was his belief that the *Sandinistas* would "manipulate" such a support. This discussion itself was an acknowledgement of his support for the *Contras* and given the fact that the latter were trying to overthrow the *Sandinista* government, it made good sense that the government would be concerned.

In 1986 before his expulsion, Bishop Vega had made frequent visits to Washington, New York and Honduras claiming Catholic persecution and supporting, if not lobbying for, the Congress to send 100 million dollars in *Contra* aid.[104] During one visit to Washington at the invitation of the Heritage Foundation, a right-wing think tank he publicly and strategically appeared with other counterrevolutionaries supporting the $100 million aid: FDN civilian leaders Adolfo Calero and Arturo Cruz and FDN Strategic Commander Col. Bermúdez. This photo opportunity was staged for the Congress and the general public: there were civilians, military men and a Catholic priest. Further, Bishop Vega accused the *Sandinistas* of assassinating three priests from his diocese in Juigalpa. He also stated that the problem was an East-West one: "in Nicaragua the fundamental problem before the revolutionary triumph was underdevelopment. Now it is how to escape from the Soviet bloc."[105] Upon returning to Nicaragua he was confronted by a number of journalists who questioned him about his claims widely reported across the United States and in international media. His "clarification" was that the "three priests" were not really priests but "delegates of the word," and they were not really assassinated by the *Sandinistas* but "had died in the days of confusion and lack of control immediately after the revolutionary triumph."[106] The "assassination of three priests" captured much more interest than this recantation.

---

[103] Bayardo cited in "Church-State," Envío (November, 1987), 40.

[104] "Church-State," Envío (November, 1987), 33.

At the request of Pro-Democracy in Central America (PRODEMCA), a far-Right group, Bishop Vega spoke in the United States on June 3, 1986. He continued his accusations that the *Sandinista* were engaged in "persecutions" and that as a consequence, this justified *Contra* aid in order to defend "human rights." He claimed:

---

[105] "Church-State," Envío (November, 1987), 38.

[106] "Church-State," Envío (November, 1987), 38.

> Each one is his own sphere. The Church has its specific function and cannot go further. But armed struggle is a human right. What remedy is left to a people that is repressed not only politically but militarily?[107]

In effect, Vega suggested that because of *Sandinista* repression, there was no choice but a counter-armed force, in this case the *Contras*. At least, this was the interpretation accepted by Reagan who acknowledged both Cardinal Obando y Bravo and Bishop Vega in his speech before the House prior to the $100 million *Contra* aid vote. According to Reagan, "[R]everend Father, we have listened to you, because we in the United States believe, like you, that even the most humble peasant has a right to be free."[108] Only the politically naive would accept the claim that these men of like mind, if of different nations, supported *Contra* aid in the interests of "the most humble peasant." If they were concerned with the right of the peasants to self-determination they might well have heeded the maxim of Marx and Mill discussed in Chapter I: that only a people can win their own freedom, and in the process, acquire the determination to preserve it. Imposed struggle and "freedom" was not analogous to self-determination. Nevertheless, on June 25, 1986 the

---

[107] "Church-State," Envío (November, 1987), 39.

[108] "Church-State," Envío (November, 1987), 39.

United States House of Representatives voted to give $100 million in aid to the *Contras*. It was a *de facto* declaration of war.

The accusations of religious persecution against the *Sandinistas* were a constant source of delegitimization of that government mostly within the United States but increasingly within Western Europe as well. Within Nicaragua, religious differences were not so simply articulated. In February, 1985, the time of Bishop Vega's visit to West Germany, Father Miguel D'Escoto, during a 15,000 strong "way of the cross" march which had just made its way to the city of Condega claimed "[S]ome of our bishops are a scandal....It is terrible that the enemy finds some misdirected bishops among its principal allies." To Obando y Bravo he made a special call, "[A]nd the call is this: have no fear of Obando. Have fear only of God, who one day will judge us."[109]

There were many other dissenting voices within Nicaragua, which were conveniently obscured. These included the three priests who held ministerial posts in the government and who were constantly harassed to resign by Cardinal Bravo. Father Ernesto Cardenal was Nicaragua's Minister of Culture. Father Miguel D'Escoto was Nicaragua's Foreign Minister and Father Fernando Cardenal, a former Professor of Philosophy at Nicaragua's National University and Dean of Student Affairs, was Nicaragua's Minister of Education under the

---

[109] "Church-State," Envío (November, 1987), 35.

Sandinistas.[110] Cardinal Obando's accusations eventually resulted in the three priests being chastized by the Pope. Clearly, if the truth about Nicaragua's condition of religious freedom was desired, the Reagan Administration would not have privileged only voices within Nicaragua which supported its neoconservative agenda. The privileging of these anti-*Sandinista* voices obscured and minimized contending voices within Nicaragua which directly contradicted the claim of "religious persecution."[111]

At least one other religious dynamic within Nicaragua was overshadowed: that between the Catholic Church and Jews. The United States' allegations of religious persecutions against the *Sandinistas* did not once address the Catholic Church's promotion of hatred, or minimally prejudice, against the Jews. By exclusively focusing on the *Sandinistas'* relations with the Catholic Church hierarchy or even the *Sandinistas'* relations with the Jewish community, the Reagan Administration obscured the complex relations between the Catholic Church and those of different religious and political beliefs. The often quoted Cardinal Obando y Bravo stated in his October 7, 1984 homily, reprinted in La Prensa, that "[T]he leaders of Israel...mistreated [the prophets], beat them, killed them. Finally, as supreme proof of his love, God sent his Divine

---

[110] Donald C. Hodges, Intellectual Foundation of the Nicaraguan Revolution (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 270.

[111] An excellent analysis of church-state relations in Nicaragua during the *Contra*/revolution is in "Church-State," Envío (November, 1987), 25-42.

Son; but they...also killed him, crucifying him."[112] Consistent with Christian blame of the Jews which has spawned, and continues to spawn, persecution of Jews worldwide, Cardenal Obando y Bravo continued by claiming, "[T]he Jews killed the prophets and finally the Son of God...Such idolatry calls forth the sky's vengeance."[113] In effect, Cardinal Bravo accused the Jews of being "Christ killers," a myth which holds much sway, especially with Christian anti-Semites. As an ironic aside, this blame seemed contradictory and even irrational since presumably if the "Son of God" had not died, there would have been no redemption for Catholics. However, given Catholic teachings and the context in which Cardinal Obando y Bravo spoke, this was not about ironies; it was anti-Semitism.

Cardinal Obando y Bravo's homily was apparently tolerable Catholic anti-Semitism, or it represented another case in which contradictory information was conveniently ignored or obscured by the Reagan Administration. This presents a problem if in fact the references to the horror of the Jewish experiences during the holocaust meant Reagan was actually concerned about Jews and any other peoples who might be at risk of experiencing similar genocide. Cardinal Obando y Bravo's homily reinscribed various myths about Jews which have been circulating within Latin America since the 1492 expulsion of Jews from Spain and their emigration to the Americas. To fully understand the context of Reagan and Cardinal Obando y Bravo's claims and the implications within Latin America, it is useful to digress a little and consider the origin and nature of anti-Semitism in the Americas. I want to illuminate this Latin American context very briefly before moving on to discuss the specific charges of persecution of Jews.

---

[112] Cardinal Obando y Bravo cited in Burke, "Christ Killers," Misery in the Name of Freedom, 92; Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 172; George Black, "Taking Note," NACLA Report on the Americas (June, 1986).

[113] Americas Watch, Human Rights in Nicaragua: Reagan Rhetoric and Reality (1985).

V.8. Contextualizing International Jewish Experiences

Earlier in this chapter I showed how disinformation campaigns involving the Miskitos were effective partly because of the ignorance of history and the invisibility of the other contending voices and the suppression of differences in experiences and opinions within Nicaragua. The ignorance of Jewish history, practices and experiences also characterized Reagan Administration discourses concerning Jews. The intent of this section, then, is to cast light on the historical, political and ideological contexts of Jews particularly in Latin America.

There are some one-half million Jews in Latin America, mostly in Mexico (35,000), Brazil (100,000) and Argentina (233,000) although smaller communities exist in Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Honduras and Nicaragua. Jewish experiences of anti-Semitism have origins in Christianity and colonialism which were simultaneously introduced/imposed upon Latin America.[114] The realities of these Jews and their social and political identities are interwoven with colonial mythology first spawned by the Medieval Catholic Church and proliferated throughout the "New World." Thus the existence of Jews in Latin America is closely associated with the rise of Catholicism in Spain (some one thousand years after Jewish existence in the area), and ultimately the Spanish expulsion of Jews in 1492.[115] This expulsion occurred on July 31, 1492 and was authorized by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella; it was only three days before Columbus set sail for his authorized voyage to the "New World." Some 300,000 of Spain's unconverted Jews were exiled under the Edict of Expulsion which remained on the books until 1968. Today, many of the world's Jews are "Sepharad," meaning Spain. Many of those in the Sepharad Diaspora moved from what is today Turkey and Greece, to North Africa, Amsterdam and eventually left Europe for the "New World."[116] In Latin America, the names of Jews are often a reflection of the Spanish communities from which they were forceably exiled: de Lamar, de Torres, de Pinto, Da Costa or da Silva ("de" and "da" meaning

---

[114] Elkin, "Quincentenary: Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism," NACLA Report on the Americas XXV, 4 (February, 1992), 4. This section on Jews and the colonial and postcolonial period will draw upon Elkin's work.

[115] Salem Alaton, "Expulsion of the Jews," The Globe and Mail (August 1, 1992), D1, D3-D4; Basil Davidson, "Columbus: the Bones and Blood of Racism," Race & Class 33, 3 (January-March, 1992); and Samir Amin, "1492," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 10-19.

[116] Alaton, "Expulsion of the Jews," D4.

"of"). Others adopted common Spanish names such as Córdoba, Castro and Girón or combined Spanish names with Jewish ones: Levy Maduro, Moses Laimbraso and Sarah Seixas.[117]

Jews within Latin America also had to survive the cruelty, myths and caricature representation disseminated by the Catholic Church and Spanish colonial administrators. One example noted by Judith Laikin Elkin was the representation of Jewishness which persists today: Jews as a "race" as opposed to a religion or as part of distinct cultural practices and traditions.[118] The determination of Jewishness was by "blood" (same as for indigenous groups) and the codified laws of Philip II (1556-1598), laws of *limpieza de sangre* mythologized Jews as a race. Based on this distortion, Isabella the Catholic instructed the governor of the Spanish colony of Hispaniola to prohibit the emigration of "Jews, Moors, heretics, New Christians [considered *conversos*, *albaraicos* or "half-breed"] and persons penanced by the Inquisition."[119] Nevertheless, some Jews continued to emigrate; those who were already in the Americas were denied participation in the professions, the government and the military. Thus Jews, instead of being constructed as the Father of Christianity, became the "genetically flawed" ethnic identity. These caricature representations of Jews persist in Latin America.

---

[117] Alaton, "Expulsion of the Jews," D4.

[118] Elkin, "Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism," 4-5.

[119] Elkin, "Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism," 5; also Jan Carew, "United We Stand! Joint Struggles of Native Americans and African Americans in the Columbian Era," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 103-127.

Some Jews and those who had converted, the so-called *conversos*, still emigrated to the Americas especially in the seventeenth century and later.[120] However, to exist openly as Jewish was illegal and so many practiced their beliefs in their homes, hiding prayer books and religious attire under tables and beds. During this period, charges of "judaizing" were levelled at opponents and those convicted were burned at the stake (ideologically this is analogous to what became known as McCarthyism). This was the case in 1528 of a blacksmith named Hernando Alonso. Although he had helped to build the ships on which Hernan Cortes sailed to the mainland of America to blockade Tenochtitlan, he was not spared death. He had been accused of baptizing a child in wine.[121] The penalties for "judaizing" were spelt out in the regularly published "Edicts of Faith." These included "changing one's shirt on Friday, cooking with olive oil rather than lard, or sweeping the floor from the center of the room toward the door." Penalties ranged from fines and imprisonment to burning at the stake.

Another myth which Catholic missionaries disseminated was that of Jews as Christ's "tormentors" and "killers." As I discussed in the previous section, this myth was reinvoked in Cardinal Obando Bravo's 1984 homily and it is not innocent of the history of anti-Semitism and Jewish persecution in Latin America. These myths were central to the conversion teachings of Native Americans, many of whom had never knowingly or openly encountered a Jew. In addition to open displays of anti-Semitism, many myths have become integral to various cultural expressions. Elkin referred to a 1988 study conducted by a sociologist at the University of Buenos Aires in which it was found that at least one-third of the respondents expressed anti-Jewish sentiments or had ill-feelings toward Jews.[122] A 1986 media survey in Peru found that stereotypic caricatures are often used to describe Jews. In Mexico, Easter Week celebrations often feature men who are painted red to represent the devil; they are called *judíos* or Jews. Jews in public office in Chile, Panama and Honduras have fared only a little better. Some held public office but there is a common perception that Jewish politicians are part of a "worldwide Jewish conspiracy." One example cited by Elkin was that of Raul Alfonsín's Radical Party in Argentina. His right-wing critics accused his government of being *"la sinagoga radical"* because it had Jewish politicans as members. Technically a *sinagoga* or synagogue means a Jewish "house of prayer." However, some Spanish language dictionaries define *sinagoga* as "conspiracy." The association of Jews with conspiracies, secrecy and subversion is common although many who adhere to these attitudes do not know much about the Jewish religion nor have they had interactions with actual Jews.[123]

---

[120] Alaton, "The Expulsion of the Jews," D3.

[121] Laikin, "Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism," 5.

---

[122] Laikin, "Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism," 5-7.

When Reagan centred his disinformation on *Sandinista* anti-Semitism he, in effect, added to the already unsettling context of Jews in the Americas since their expulsion from Spain. This context also cast light on how Jews within Central America and the United States might have approached and interpreted charges of anti-Semitism in Latin America but also claims that the *Sandinistas* were engaged in "persecutions" within Nicaragua which paralleled the holocaust.

V.9. Another Holocaust, Anti-Semitism or Hoax?

According to Edgar Chamorro, in the spring of 1983 three CIA agents met with *Contra* leaders in Coral Gables, Florida. The *Contras* were advised by the CIA to "target" American Jews by claiming the *Sandinistas* were anti-Semitic.[124] The rationale for targeting American Jews was that the CIA strategists thought "that the media was controlled by Jews, and if we could show that Jews were being persecuted, it would help a lot."[125] No doubt the architects of this plan saw it as "killing two birds with one stone":

---

[123] Elkin, "Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism," 5, 7.

[124] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 170; and Jonathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott, and Jane Hunter, The Iran Contra Connection: Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era (Boston, MA.: South End Press, 1987), 101-104.

[125] Edgar Chamorro cited in Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 170.

comparing the Miskito Indians' situation to Jewish persecution would engender popular support for the *Contras* and labelling the *Sandinistas* anti-Semitic would get Jews who "controlled" the media to write favourably of the Administration's policies.

The use of anti-Semitism was part of a major disinformation strategy which, when combined with those noted above, served to confuse the understanding of "what" was happening in Nicaragua as well as the "who" of Jews. The Jewish experiences were used in one of two ways: either accusing the *Sandinistas* of persecuting Nicaraguan Jews or tying the experiences of Jews during the holocaust to Miskitos during the *Contra*/revolution. The latter was part of a psychological warfare strategy which ranks among the most insidious of strategies conducted during the *Contra*/revolution and its implications certainly extended beyond Nicaragua-United States relations. Assistant Secretary of State Abrams accused the *Sandinistas* of being anti-Semitic because they granted official recognition to the Palestine Liberation Organization.[126] As I have noted above, Reagan accused the *Sandinistas* of belonging to a terrorist network comprised of Middle East "radicals" such as Libya's Qadhafi and Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. Within the United States, prominent Jews rejected this loose association of policy alliances with anti-Semitism. While not rejecting the possibility that there might have been anti-Semitism or other reasons for supporting the

---

[126] "All Things Considered," National Public Radio (August 24, 1984).

Contras, the Executive Director of the American Jewish Congress Henry Siegman rejected anti-Semitism as one such justification:

> The only significant question before the American people with respect to Nicaragua is whether the appropriate response to the dangers posed by the Sandinistas is military assistance to the contras...To invoke anti-Semitism as an expedient to gain support for controversial policies not only brings these policies further into question, but also compromises the battle against anti-Semitism.[127]

In March 1986 Reagan claimed that "the Sandinistas have launched assaults against ethnic and religious groups. The capital's only synagogue was desecrated and fire-bombed--the entire Jewish community forced to flee Nicaragua."[128] It was true that the Jewish synagogue was damaged. However, the damage occurred during insurrections against Somoza and not as a direct invidious act of *Sandinista* anti-Semitism. Further, because of the damages sustained during the insurrections, the synagogue had been abandoned before 1979 when the *Sandinistas* triumphed.[129] Upon coming to power, the *Sandinistas* did appropriate the building and used it as a children's association.

---

[127] See Siegman's letter, "Anti-Semitism Should Have No Place in the Nicaraguan Debate," New York Times (April 18, 1986); also cited in Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 173.

[128] The New York Times (March 17, 1986).

[129] Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 92.

Acting upon the Reagan Administration's account of these events, the Latin American bureau of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in the United States disseminated the allegations that Managua's Jews were being persecuted and that their synagogue had been desecrated. That year the *Sandinista* government offered to return the synagogue. However, Managua's Jewish community of about 200 did not have the resources to restore or maintain it, although they did anticipate using the synagogue at a later date to support Jewish community activities when funds became available.[130] In effect, they made it be known that they envisioned the synagogue being used by members of the Jewish community in the future.

The accusations of anti-Jewish oppression were investigated by groups such as the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the Organization of American States and, within Nicaragua, the openly pro-*Contra* Permanent Commission on Human Rights. As will be discussed more carefully in the following section, the charges of systematic anti-Semitism were dismissed as Reagan Administration distortions and manipulation of events.[131] This is not to say that the *Sandinistas* or the general Nicaraguan citizenry were impervious to the anti-Semitism within Latin American societies.[132] I have argued in fact that there is a long history of anti-Semitism in Latin America. Thus it would have been commendable if the *Sandinistas* individually or collectively could have claimed consciousness of the subtle manifestations of anti-Semitism and if they had been actively seeking to counter such manifestations. However such a claim is impossible without careful study; intuitively a generalized version of this claim would be dubious. The claims here are more modest and probable: the specific Reagan Administration charges of a *Sandinista* policy of anti-Semitism were fradulent.

---

[130] See, America's Watch, Human Rights in Nicaragua: Reagan, Rhetoric and Reality (New York: Americas Watch, 1985).

[131] Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 92.

[132] Elkin, "Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism," 4-7.

In addition to the CIA's coaching of *Contra* leaders on how to elicit the sympathy of American Jews, the Reagan Administration also "used" two Nicaraguan Jews, Isaac Stavisky and Abraham Gorn, as proof of *Sandinista* anti-Semitism. The Administration claimed that Stavisky and Gorn had been persecuted because of their religion. This accusation was complicated by the fact that Gorn was a noted leader in Nicaragua's small Jewish community. Additionally, the Director of Latin America's Anti-Defamation League Rabbi Morton Rosenthal, accepted Stavisky and Gorn's stories and claimed they were driven out of Nicaragua because of the *Sandinistas'* anti-Semitism. He also claimed that the *Sandinistas* had seized the Jewish synagogue.[133] This case was used to buffer the CIA's campaign to depict the *Sandinistas* as anti-Semites or at least as anti-Jews (in addition to being anti-Miskitos). The CIA anticipated that it would elicit the outrage of American Jews and, indirectly, these feelings would transfer into support for the Miskitos and the *Contras*.[134] The campaign was another cynical psychological preying upon anticipated emotional responses. However, it only established the variability in the politics among Jews and the diversity in Jewish political identities and ideological alliances within the United States and Nicaragua.[135]

---

[133] Rabbi Rosenthal quoted in Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 170.

The charge of anti-Semitism was contradicted by Ambassador Quainton who sent the following cable four days before the Reagan Administration's direct meeting with Stavisky and Gorn:

> [T]he evidence fails to demonstrate that the Sandinistas have followed a policy of anti-Semitism...Although most members of Nicaragua's tiny Jewish community have left the country and some have had their properties confiscated, there is no direct correlation between their Jewish religion and the treatment they received.[136]

The CIA was fully aware that the two men had disagreements with the *Sandinistas* because of their collaboration with Somoza, not because they were Jews.[137] The *Sandinistas* were also aware that in January 1979, a shipment from Honduras to Nicaragua's National Guard was received by Gorn. It was believed that Gorn was not only an ally of Somoza, but that he was engaged in arms trafficking with Israel to supply the National Guard.[138] Likewise Stavisky, an associate of Gorn, had admitted to engaging in arms trafficking for the Somoza regime.[139] After studying the charges, the World Jewish Congress and Rabbi Heszel Klepfisc of Panama issued a joint press release. They reported that they had found evidence of anti-Israel sentiments, not anti-Jewish sentiments.[140] The head of the American Jewish Committee office in Mexico, Sergio Nudelstejer, stated that "factors other than anti-Semitism, including their belonging to the propertied class," influenced the *Sandinistas'* treatment of Gorn and Stavisky.[141] The Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) also analyzed the story and in their report identified some of the complexities I have been attempting to illuminate: complexities concerning Israel and the Palestinians, Zionism and Jewish identity politics in the Americas. The Council wrote that among the *Sandinistas* there was:

---

[134] "Reagan Bids Jews Support Contras," Israeli Foreign Affairs (April, 1986); "U.S. Jews against Contras," Jewish Currents (June, 1986).

[135] Robert Weisbrot, "Dateline Managua: Anti-Semitism or Anti-climax," Moment (October, 1984); and Edward Cody, "Managua Jews Reject Anti-Semitism Charge," Washington Post (August 29, 1983).

[136] Latin America Regional Report, Mexico and Central America (May 4, 1984).

[137] Jeff McConnell, "How Israel came to deal with the contras," Boston Globe (January 18, 1987).

---

[138] Edward Cody, "Managua's Jews Reject Anti-Semitism Charge," Washington Post (August 29, 1983); also Comisión Nacional de Promoción y Protección de los Derechos Humanos, "Resultados de una investigación que la comisión nacional...en relación a un communicado de la 'Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'Nai B'rith' sobre una supuesta persecución a la comunidad judía en Nicaragua," (Managua, 1983), 5.

[139] Franz Schneiderman, "Bending Swords into Plowshares: An Investigation of the Tensions between Israel and Nicaragua," A Special Report by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (Washington, D.C., November 26, 1985).

[140] Latin America Regional Report (May 4, 1984); see also, Saul Sorrin, "Report from Nicaragua," Reform Judaism (Summer, 1984); and Dan Sudran and Robert Rubin, "In defense of Nicaragua--anti-Semitism is not evident," Northern California Jewish Bulletin (August 2, 1985).

[141] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 171.

> ...the sort of sympathy with the Palestinian cause that is de riguer [sic] among left-leaning Third World regimes. This sentiment, coupled with the role Israel has played in arming rightist regimes [including Somoza] throughout Latin America, has prompted the Sandinistas to adopt an avowedly anti-Zionist foreign policy.[142]

The anti-Israel sentiments were due to the fact that Israel was one of the principal suppliers of arms to Somoza. Nicaragua's Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto admitted to political and ideological differences with Israel but not intentional anti-Semitism when he claimed that the *Sandinista* government has "broken our relations with Israel, but we go out of our way to show our love and respect for the Jewish people."[143]

An already complicated relationship between Israel and non-Israeli Jews was exploited by the Reagan Administration propagandists to the extent that American Jews, divided on their relationship to Israel, also became divided on whether anti-Israeli sentiments in

---

[142] Schneiderman, "Bending Swords" (November 26, 1985); also in Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 171.

[143] D'Escoto quoted in David K. Shipler, "Israel and the U.S. Stay on Speaking Terms," New York Times (December 29, 1985).

Nicaragua meant anti-Semitic sentiments as well.[144] In Nicaragua, there was also disagreement among Jews on whether they were the victims of anti-Semitism or whether they were being used as propaganda.[145] Ironically, although the accusations were meant to engender support for the Miskitos and more generally Reagan's support for the *Contras*, at best it only solidified differences in opinions which were already held by American Jews. Jane Hunter pointed out that the more conservative National Jewish Coalition accused the *Sandinistas* of anti-Semitism. Further, members of the Jewish Defense League stoned the home of the Nicaraguan consul in Toronto.[146] Moreover, various individuals came out in favour of aid during the Congressional debate. The Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, Kenneth Bialkin, personally endorsed aid and clarified that his position did not represent that of the Conference.[147] The Congressional Record of March 19, 1986 contains a letter signed by Max Fisher and Jack Stein which argued that Nicaragua's relations with the PLO and Libya were cause for United States concern.[148] Ivan Boesky, later convicted and imprisoned for insider trading on Wallstreet, and Congressional Representative Chic Hecht (R-NV) also strongly supported the *Contras* and accused the *Sandinistas* of anti-Semitism.

---

[144] Laurie Becklund, "Sandinistas Are Anti-Semitic, Group Charges," Los Angeles Times (March 14, 1985); David Silverberg, "Which priority for Jews: Israel or liberal causes?," Northern California Jewish Bulletin (November 22, 1985).

[145] Joseph Berger, "Nicaragua's Jews: Wide Disagreement on Status," New York Times (April 20, 1986).

[146] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 173.

[147] New York Times (March 6, 1986).

In contrast, an anti-*Contra* aid resolution was passed by the American Jewish Congress. Prior to the House vote on the aid, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform), representing some one and one-half million Jews, sent a letter to Congressional representatives. The letter opposed the 100 million dollars aid package and rejected the allegations of anti-Semitism.[149] Hunter found that on March 20, 1986 when the House voted in favour of the aid package 21 of the 30 Jewish House of Representative members voted against the package. In effect, there was considerable diversity among Jews. Among other things, this diversity contradicted the homogenous identity construct of the CIA and more generally the Reagan Administration.

The contradictions of those engaged in the efforts to manipulate Jewish sentiments were always evident even if it was sometimes difficult to construct a clear case. One of the clearest instances of the disjuncture between an ideological discourse and some sense of an actual reality or genuineness, occurred in 1985 when Reagan visited West Germany. It brought to light Reagan's own ignorance of

---

[148] Mideast Observer (April 1, 1986); Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 176.

[149] Hunter, Israeli Foreign Policy, 177-178.

Jewish experiences but also his studied insensitivity to the feelings of Jews and especially holocaust survivors. On May 8, 1985 at the United States Air Force Base at Bitburg, in what was then West Germany, Reagan claimed:

> Today freedom-loving people around the world must say: 'I am a Berliner, I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-Semitism, I am an Afghan, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam, I am a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban and a Miskito Indian in Nicaragua.[150]

Here, Reagan tied together a number of complex inter/national political, ethnic and religious identities. He contextualized them in terms of a quest for freedom. In particular he acknowledged the existence of anti-Semitism worldwide and implicitly the lack or absence of freedom for Miskitos in Nicaragua. Moreover, he claimed, at least symbolically, to be a Jew and a Miskito Indian because of his shared love for freedom. Were these claims indicative of romanticism, cynicism and/or Reagan's reality? A critical examination of the context of Reagan's claims and his knowledge of anti-Semitism, the holocaust and Jewish experiences worldwide might help answer this question. I have shown that his knowledge of "who" are the Miskitos of Nicaragua were or the conditions under which they lived was suspect, distorted and often simply wrong. What about his knowledge of Jews as it relates to the significance of the holocaust and historic sites in Germany? Here, as with the Miskitos, Reagan's actions and speeches demonstrated embarrassing ignorance.

---

[150] Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, "Who Are the Contras?: An Analysis of the Make-up of the Military Leadership of the Rebel Forces," Congressional Record-House, 131, no. 48, 99th Congress, 1st Session (April 23, 1985), H2335-H2337; and "Contra Military Leadership Still Somoza Officers," Congressional Record-Senate, 99th Congress, 2nd Session, 132, no. 34 (March 19, 1986), S3026-S3030.

Reagan's visit to Germany on May 8 included what one might minimally characterize as an insensitive visit to Bitburg, the site of some 47 SS graves.[151] On the same day as Reagan visited Bitburg where he made the above noted comments, he was officially scheduled by the German government to visit the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in the morning. Reagan chose to follow through with both visits on the same day. The German officials dubiously claimed that snow cover had prevented them from recognizing the existence of SS graves prior to Reagan's visit.[152] Apparently snow cover also had induced a temporary experience of historical amnesia in both the case of the German government and Reagan. It was dubious that knowledge of the burials in Bitburg were unknown. Further, while at Bergen-Belsen, Reagan claimed that "the German people have very few alive that remember the war, and certainly none that were adults and participating in any way."[153] Richard Wolin, in his "Introduction" to Jurgen Habermas' New Conservatism, pointed out that Reagan himself was in his thirties during the Nazi genocide and no doubt there were also Germans alive who were part of those experiences in various ways. Moreover, it is probable that members of "Hitler's Youth", artists, doctors and philosophers who were the architects of Hitler's Aryan hegemony through "race purification" practices, are now seniors if not in Germany, then at least throughout the world where they emigrated after Hitler's military defeat.

---

[151] See, Richard Wolin's "Introduction," to Habermas' New Conservatism, xiv; and Habermas' own "On the Public Use of History" in New Conservatism, 230-231.

[152] Paul Hilberg, "Bitburg as a Symbol" in Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective, ed. G. Hartman (Indianapolis, 1986), 21-22.

[153] Wolin, "Introduction," New Conservatism, xxviiin15, n16.

Reagan's visit coincided with the fortieth anniversary of the end of World War Two and the fall of Hitler's Nazi regime. Although much of the debate in Germany focused on the SS, others have pointed out that this focus obscured the integral role played by the regular army during the Nazi regime. The SS was supported by the German Wehrmacht (regular army) in its activities directed at exterminating the Jews and other "undesirables" including gypsies, the disabled and homosexuals. More reasonable voices in Germany suggested that the scheduling of the visit to Bitburg was a way for German politicians to try and "normalize" the Nazi regime, and to assuage historical guilt. This tendency is still evident in the denial of contemporary historians to acknowledge not only the horror of the holocaust, but the responsibility of German citizens and the state alike for the holocaust.[154]

---

[154] In "Apologetic Tendencies" in the New Conservatism Habermas discusses the disturbing rise of holocaust revisionist literature in Germany including: Andreas Hillguber's "positive history." In Two Sorts of Destruction: The Smashing of the German Reich and the End of

These political and moral gaffes were compounded by a series of other gaffes made by Reagan. At Bitburg Reagan made what Wolin called a macabre equation, namely that the SS soldiers and exterminated Jews were both "victims" in the Nazi war.[155] These gaffes occurred in the midst of the Reagan Administration "use" of the holocaust as an analogy to describe the Miskito-*Sandinista* relations. They suggest that Reagan was himself profoundly ignorant about the history of the holocaust and unconscionably insensitive to the Jewish pain and suffering during the holocaust and since. Both the German visit to Bitburg and the deployment of the holocaust as metaphor revealed a remarkable ignorance for any head of state or an indifference to the truth and an embarrassing ahistoricism. Reagan's use of the holocaust represented what Klepfisz articulated as a commodification of Jewish *painful* experiences and a commercialization which ultimately severs the concept from the historical fact. In this way the historical event is "metaphored out" of reality. The use of the concept was loose, faddish, contrary

---

European Jewry, Hillguber constructs a false choice: either accepting the German soldiers as heroes bravely protecting the state or allowing the Soviet Red Army to overtake the "Fatherland." Also, Michael Sturmer, speechwriter for Chancellor Helmut Kohl argues that the task of the historian is to identify "positive" historical images, meaning the "positive" (or non-Jewish) experiences during the holocaust needed to be highlighted. Ernest Nolte similarly attempts to create a "normal notion," which ultimately requires minimizing the significance of Aushwitz and the holocaust.

[155] See also Charles Maier, "Immoral Equivalence," The New Republic (December, 1986); and Anson Rabinbach, "German Historians Debate the Nazi Past," Dissent (Spring, 1988), 192-200.

to actual factual experiences in Nicaragua.

One month after the visit to Germany, on June 6, 1985, at a speech in Birmingham, Alabama, Reagan told his listeners that the *Sandinistas* were conducting "a campaign of virtual genocide against the Miskito Indians."[156] These claims continued through the 1986 Congressional *Contra* aid vote. No doubt, the desire for the 100 million dollars for the *Contras* led to these manufactured claims and to this extent, disinformation was effective.

V.10. Conclusions

The misuse of the Jewish experiences as an analogy was intended to illuminate the negative experiences of Miskitos in Nicaragua. The analogy obscured the actualities of Miskito and Jewish experiences within Nicaragua. The Reagan Administration's almost exclusive focus on the *Sandinistas* suggested the latter represented a special case of virulent anti-Semitism. Such an exclusive focus obscured the international reality of pervasive anti-Semitism in Europe and the Americas. If Nicaragua was the worst, this must also have meant worse than Austria, Germany, France, Montreal, Idaho, Argentina and any number of other countries and states where anti-Semitism was on the uprise.[157] In making this observation, I am not seeking to displace legitimate concern for the Jews within Nicaragua. Rather, I want to challenge the special status given to Nicaragua. To accept Reagan, Abrams or the State Department's claims as accurate, arguably one would have to ignore or minimize a number of significant international experiences of Jews in the Americas and Europe. This obscuration of the international context was particularly evident during Reagan's German visit in the midst of growing holocaust revisionism among neoconservative German historians.

---

[156] Plano and Olton, The International Relations Dictionary (Santa Barbara, Cal: ABC-Clio, 1988), 199.

[157] Habermas, "Apologetic Tendencies," New Conservatism,

The experience of Reagan in West Germany seemed to suggest that he was ignorant of the signification of the holocaust and what it means today for Jews (and possibly even for anti-Semites). Yet the analogy was made. The idea of Miskitos being "herded" and "slaughtered" as Reagan alleged, and consigned to "concentration camps" as Kirkpatrick claimed, was manufactured during the *Contra*/revolution to recall to memory history's worst genocide. When Reagan described the *Sandinista* government as the worst since the Third Reich and one of a confederation of terrorist states which were "run by the strangest collection of misfits, Looney Tunes and squalid criminals since the advent of the Third Reich,"[158] the analogy became hard to ignore. Ironically, at the same time as

---

212-267; Palmer, Descent into Discourse, 45-47; Richard Greeman, "The French Republic and the Holocaust," Z Magazine (January, 1993), 43-45; Elkin, "Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism," 4-7; Sanchita Basu and Anjuli Gupta, "Germany: Rise of a Fourth Reich," Spare Rib, Issue 238 (Oct./Nov., 1992), 54-55.

[158] Reagan, cited in Brody, Contra Terror in Nicaragua, 4.

Reagan was accusing Nicaragua of the misdeed of cohorting with Iran, his National Security Council staff under the guidance of Lt. Col. Oliver North was selling arms to Iran at inflated prices. The profits were diverted to the *Contras*. Nevertheless Reagan raised the spectre of the Third Reich and terrorism by claiming further that if the *Contras* were not aided in their war against the *Sandinistas*, "we'll have a permanent staging ground for terrorism. A home away from home for Qadhafi, Arafat and the Ayatollah, just three hours by air from the U.S. Border."[159] Was this a proper use or a misuse of historical examples?

In "Reagan's Untruths About Managua,"[160] Abraham Brumberg, the opinion page editor of the New York Times, denounced the repeated use of the holocaust as an analogy to describe the relocation of Miskitos (and Sumus and Mestizos). Brumberg questioned the Reagan Administration's apparent ignorance of history and inability to make moral distinctions, especially the fast and loose comparison between the death of some 60 Miskitos *and Sandinistas* during skirmishes, with the deliberate genocide which characterized Hitler's war against the Jews, the (dis)abled, gypsies and other groups. How could anyone compare this with "the systematic slaughter of six million Jews and millions of others during the Second World War?," Brumberg asked.

---

[159] New York Times (March 6, 1986); Mideast Observer (March 15, 1986).

[160] Brumberg, New York Times (June 18, 1985).

The general tenor of Brumberg's editorial was not to negate a humanitarian interest in the plight of the Miskitos so much as to question the manipulation of facts which presented a grossly distorted picture of what was actually happening in Nicaragua. In the same editorial, Brumberg speculated that perhaps Reagan's (and arguably Kirkpatrick's) belief that the end justified the means allowed him "to use even the most unscrupulous tools--including untruths, quarter-truths and travesties of history--to topple the Sandinistas" while simultaneously claiming to support a peaceful settlement to the problems in Central America. Amidst this contradictory array of claims, the "truth" became but one more manipulated variable in a wide-ranging strategy to defeat the *Sandinistas*. Truth, indeed, was a casualty of war (and a weapon).

The CIA's policy assumed a homogeneity in Jewish opinions which never existed, and itself was informed by anti-Semitic stereotyping. This cannot be over-emphasized since it illustrated that the CIA was operating on the basis of "conspiracy theories" usually associated with neo-Nazi groups, not national intelligence agencies. The conspiracy theory that the Jews controlled the newspapers was usually not espoused by those who identified with Jewish liberation, as Reagan claimed at Bitburg in 1985. It was this cynical misuse of historical experiences and contemporary peoples' concerns that leads to my scepticism about exactly what ideas informed the Reagan Administration's adoption of the Miskito "cause" or repeat references to Jews and Jewish experiences.

From this analysis, I now shift the focus of this study to the future and to a reflection upon the possibilities for liberation. The next two chapters represent my effort to move beyond the ideology of *contra* to an ideology of hope and empowerment, especially for indigenous peoples and Africans of the slave diaspora, living in the Americas some 500 years after Columbus, the introduction of Christianity, European colonization and enslavement of "pigmented" peoples. In Chapter VII, I shift to an examination of the indigenous peoples, to the extent possible, from the perspective of their lived experiences. Such an analysis will reveal the sometimes profound disjuncture between psychological warfare, ideological discourses and material lived reality. Chapter VII will show further how the exclusive focus on the Miskitos profoundly distorted the political, economic and cultural dynamics of *costeños*. It also will show that the realities of the Atlantic Coast cannot be understood exclusively from the perspective of the Nicaraguan nation-state nor exclusively from political events as they transpired on the Pacific Coast. An examination of the history of the Atlantic Coast and an ethnohistorical look at the groups which inhabit the area will put into context the *costeños'* varied and complex responses to the Nicaraguan Revolution and *Contra*/revolution.

Lament of the Images

They took the masks
The sacrificial faces
The crafted wood which stretches
To the fires of natural gods
The shrines where the axe
Of lightening
Releases invisible forces
Of silver.

They took the painted bones
The stools of molten kings
The sacred charged with blood
And they burned what
They could not
Understand.

[...]
They took some images
And brought them across
The whitening seas
And stored them in
Basements
For the later study
Of the African's
Dark and inpenetrable
Mind.
They called them
'Primitive objects'
And subjected them
To the milk
Of scientific
Scrutiny.

The images died in spirit
And contorted
Their faces
In the Western
Darkness.

In their native lands
Other Images were made
For new seasons
A new god
For a new
Age.
[...]

Ben Okri
An African Elegy (1992).

Chapter VI

Theorizing Liberation: History, Colonial Discourse, Indigenous and African Identities

> The actual fact that humanity is reborn with every baby, and that each new arrival potentially has the right--and I think the duty--to remake the history he or she inherits, is transformed into a purification of that history, and that inheritance. To begin at zero, without personal memory, is seized as an occasion for the erasure of collective memory and history; is used to whitewash and forget the past, to which the newest arrival, whether he likes it or not, is linked.
>
> Ariel Dorfman
> *The Empire's Old Clothes* (1983).

> The aim of judgment in historical or literary-critical discourse...is not that of determining guilt or innocence. It is to change history to memory: to make a case for what should be remembered, and how it should be remembered. This responsibility converts every judgment into a judgment on the person who makes it.
>
> Geoffrey Hartman
> *"History and Judgment"* (1989).

VI.1. Introduction

In the "Theses on Feuerbach," Marx rightly claimed that all too many "philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point however is to *change* it."[1] In the introductory chapter to this study it was pointed out that this chapter, and the one to follow, will have a different intent and focus. In this chapter, I reflect upon the conceptual and ethico-practical elements necessary for understanding liberation, particularly as it relates to the indigenous peoples of the Americas and Africans of the slave diaspora. I focus on the indigenous and ethnic populations of the Atlantic Coast and, specifically, provide my perspective on revisiting ethnohistories, and a conceptual framework for interpreting the histories and practico-political experiences of Nicaragua's indigenous and ethnic populations. Penultimately, I hope to contribute to the resources for changing how they were often misinterpreted by those of the political Left and the Right, not only during the *Contra*/revolution, but also throughout their political history. As I showed in Chapter V, the task of interpreting these complex, often divergent and contradictory experiences cannot be centred exclusively in an explanation of the political economy of the Atlantic Coast during the *Contra*/revolution or even the Revolution. The latter is inextricably linked to world history, especially the history of European imperialism, colonialism and, ultimately the European and North American economic, political, cultural and religious power -- hegemony -- over Latin America and the Caribbean. To understand the Atlantic Coast, it is necessary to understand both the practices and discourses of the colonizer and acts of agency and resistance of those encountered and/or colonized.

---

[1] Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in The Marxist Reader, ed., Emile Burns (New York: Avenel Books, 1982), XI, 195.

This chapter has four central objectives. First, I reflect upon at least the conscious intentions which govern my effort to interpret and rewrite the political-historical experiences of indigenous and enslaved Africans primarily in Latin America and the Caribbean. Second, I draw upon primarily the works of Marx, Sigmund Freud, Herbert Marcuse and Antonio Gramsci in order to develop a conceptual framework for thinking about multiple ethnic identities in transhistorical and transnational contexts. Third, drawing upon the assumptions of this framework, I examine colonial discourse, indigenous identities and how various European nations came to exercise hegemony over the Americas. It is imperative at this post-Columbian conjuncture that a critique be made of the role of colonial discourse in shaping how indigenous peoples throughout the Americas came to be understood. Fourth, briefly I examine the debate which emerged during the preparation to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' voyages to the Americas. This debate overlapped and was sublimated by the *Contra*/revolution. In particular, I look at questions concerning "how" to conceptualize the various claims about the Colombian experiences with the indigenous peoples. Two standout as central: "discovery" and "exchange/encounter." Are they "myths," "paradigms" or "models"? Ultimately, this chapter will outline my present thoughts on the relationship between historical materialism, ideology, culture, and the political consciousness and identities of individuals and/or social groups. First, then, my reflections on writing political history and ethnicity.

VI.2. Interpreting and Re/writing: Post/Colonial History

How true it seems that people "make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."[2] Political philosophers have often speculated about the amount of control humans have over life and how much of it is dependent upon nature, chance, fate, the actions of others; what Niccolò Machiavelli in The Prince called *fortuna*.[3] Machiavelli claimed that in order to influence life, to confront the vagarities of *fortuna*, human beings must be audacious. To suggest that *fortuna* can be influenced is to suggest that human nature is not fixed (even if it can become fixated), and instead is potentially and at least partially malleable. To claim that human beings must be audacious is to claim that they cannot be complacent, pliable and apathetic. Rather, audacious peoples must be conscious and exercise agency. Who and how many are prepared to be audacious, to confront the vicissitudes of *fortuna* and under what circumstances are, perhaps, the critical questions of history: the few, the many; the owners, the workers; women, men; master and/or slave? Does woman make herself and by virtue of this is history maker and/or is there some sense of the identity of human beings and aspect of material conditions which are transhistorical, meaning are there some universal structures and prevailing concerns common to all humans in all times?

---

[2] Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" in Karl Marx and Friedrick Engels, Selected Works, 2 vols. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), I, 247.

[3] Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. and ed. Mark Mosa (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), 213.

This chapter is concerned with the past for a simple reason: it is doubtful that political philosophers can understand, interpret or change the world without knowledge of history and without a historical consciousness. This presents a paradox. In addition to claiming that the shaping of history is partly determined by an historical materialism centred in economic modes and relations of production as well as human agency, Marx argued in the "Eighteenth Brumaire," that social revolutions cannot derive their validity exclusively from the past, "only from the future." Further, he wrote that the "traditions of the dead generations" cannot weigh "like a nightmare on the brain of the living."[4] Yet, he also recognized that a better future cannot be made without circumventing the errors of the past, without stripping the present of the superstitions, lies and distortions of the past and the haunting memories of the dead. In order to make these claims, one must escape Nietzsche's "original error," meaning one must have an historical sense which recognized that today's "man" is not an *asterna veritas*, a measure of all things.[5] This only can come from a careful study of history. However, while calling for "*historical philosophizing*, Nietzsche rejected a single perspective metanarrative which *explained* and instead suggested several modes of viewing the past.[6]

---

[4] Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire," 247.

[5] Nietzsche, "Human all-too-Human," aphorism 2 in The Portable Nietzsche Reader, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (Markham, Ontario: Penguin, 1954), 51.

In the conclusion to Black Skin, White Masks, Frantz Fanon argued that one cannot be a "slave to the past," nor should one look to the past, for example, to discover "the existence of a Negro civilization in the fifteenth century" or to revive "an unjustly unrecognized Negro civilization."[7] In continuing, Fanon claimed that such a discovery or revival "confers no potent of humanity on me. Like it or not, the past can in no way guide me in the present moment." Knowledge of past civilizations alone did not constitute personal or social emancipation, could not make contemporary peoples better, more just, more fair, more humane or enlightened in contemporary life and *into the future.* Only actions of humanity in the present can lead to people recreating themselves despite contemporary men who cling to the glory of ancient philosophers and civilizations. The latter reconfirmed Rene Descartes' claim in Discourse on the Method that persons who cannot think independently, and who must always appeal to the authority of an Aristotle, for example, are persons who are ill-equipped to deal with modern life and are like "ivy that tends to climb no higher than the trees supporting it."[8]

---

[6] Nietzsche, "Human, All-Too-Human," 51; and Nietzsche, "The Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," 59-123.

[7] Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1967), 225, 226.

[8] Descartes, Discourse on the Method and Meditations on First Philosophy, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, [1637], 1980), 37.

In cautioning against some of the reasons for studying history, Fanon was in fact echoing a similar caution made by Hegel in Reason in History; the vague memory of the past is no substitute for the intensity and the freedom to act in the present moment.[9] This did not mean that Fanon or Hegel rejected the study of history, in fact to the contrary. Fanon claimed that he would have been happy to acquire knowledge about third century African literature or architecture, or to "know that a correspondence had flourished between some Negro philosophers and Plato." However, the essential dilemma was in ascertaining how "this fact would *change anything* in the lives of the eight-year-old children who labor in the cane fields of Martinique or Guadeloupe [emphasis added]."[10] In effect, it is important to consider how knowledge of the past can help us to understand, to interpret and to change the present conditions of inequality and un-freedom for the immense majority of humanity. The past is a crucible of knowledge, a resource for meditating upon the present and the future.[11] The danger in this self-assertion of subjectivity is that the past is reduced too easily to a mere convenience for the present, leading to the misuse of historical examples as deplored by Nietzsche.

In trying to escape the binary construction of civilization-cannibalism to which non-Western peoples were subjected in colonial discourse, Fanon too readily dismissed the political-psychological and liberatory desire undergirding, for example, postcolonial African, Iroquois or Sumu peoples' quests to recover their history, a history they perceive to have been distorted by colonists and defenders of conquest. There is a tension between recollecting intelligible meaning on the one hand, and the reduction of illusions and demystification in the process of emancipation on the other hand.[12] Fanon felt constrained and "imprisoned" by the dynamic wherein "[F]ace to face with the white man, the Negro has a past to legitimate, a vengeance to exact; face to face with the Negro, the contemporary white man feels the need to recall the times of cannibalism."[13] In order to escape blame for subjugation and for the barbarity of conquest, the European descendents tend to evoke the notion of "cannibalism."

---

[9] Hegel, Reason in History, 7-9.

[10] Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 230.

[11] Gadamer, Truth and Method, 456.

This evocation is to remind the African descendent that prior to colonization s/he was, according to European dualistic conceptions, savage, primitive and un-civilized (pre-history). The use of cannibalism is thus meant to put the African and indigenous peoples, the others, in "their place" and to suggest that the latter should exhibit the proper demeanor of an inferior, namely be *grateful* that the white man "burdened" himself with civilizing missions. This deliberate deployment of cannibalism has produced a whole discourse which will be carefully examined in sections five and six. What is useful to note at this point is that the fear of its evocation was sufficient to make Fanon ambivalent about being tied to or becoming a "slave of the past."[14]

---

[12] Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 26. Ricoeur associates the demystification focus particularly with Freud, Nietzsche and Marx.

[13] Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 225.

Being indiscriminately tied to the past and attempting nostalgically to relive ancient civilizations encased human history in this past and burdened the present with mere illusions of greatness. No experience proved this point more than Germany under Hitler. In order to recreate his idols of the brain -- Athens, Sparta, Rome -- Hitler destroyed the present and forever fettered all Germans, and all humanity, with one of modern history's worst cases of barbarism. Thus, when Fanon cautioned against seeking to revive and relive past civilizations, his main criticism was against "the inhuman voices which were those of their respective ancestors in order that authentic communication be possible."[15] What can the past defenders of slavery, colonization or female subjugation teach contemporary European, African, Sumu or Blackfoot women and men about how to live together in the present, and on into the future, as equals? Nothing except how to evoke, perpetuate and mask ideas and conditions of structural inequality and un-freedom for the many.

---

[14] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 225.

[15] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 231.

This does not mean that such theorists, texts and discourses are without any redeeming value. It means, rather, that those Leftist revolutionaries who seek *the answers* for certain contemporary conditions exclusively from the past are avoiding the need to think hard about new and liberatory answers. It is a delusion to attempt to find liberation for women in texts imbued with misogyny, freedom for Africans and indigenous peoples in texts and discourses enchained by a glorification of the denial of some peoples' freedom (slaves), and/or which are permeated by racism and anti-Semitism. Those whose eyes are so fixated on this past inexplicably attempt to find a circle of pearls in a swamp of pigs. With these comments in mind, I now shift this analysis to a more specific focus upon the writing of ethnohistory.

VI.3. From Victorian to Postcolonial Ethnohistory

A romantic and too often mystifying view of the European conquest and colonization has received considerable play and replay over the last 500 years. However, over the last few decades especially, the prevailing view has been vigourously challenged by *dependentistas*, neo-Marxists and postcolonial scholars self-consciously interested in casting a new and clearer light on what the colonial conjuncture in history actually meant for the enslaved and colonized. While some see this movement in intellectual and social history as unjustified revisionism, others see it as necessary for the pursuit of human emancipation, for national liberation and for self-determination by indigenous peoples and the descendents of former slaves.[16] It is perhaps ironic that many of these non-Western postcolonial scholars were schooled in European educational institutions and utilized this opportunity to challenge European hegemony from within.[17] This has been nicely complemented by the work of Western scholars who are acutely aware of the nature and effects of colonialism and who reject the traditional anthropological approach of the Victorian era. The latter was firmly situated in colonialism. Accounts of the "strange" New World were accompanied by adjectives such as "bizarre" or "exotic," probably signifying unknown, different or simply new.

Documentations of Western scholars' encounters with "alien cultures" were usually written after "participant observations" and ostensibly from a position of analytic distance.[18] The assumption undergirding these "natural-historical ambitions" was that so-called alien cultures could be understood and described using "our" concepts, symbols, that is, exclusively on our terms.[19] Of these colonial encounters laced with intellectual hubris, some contemporary analysts have little good to say, seeing participant observation as fundamentally "dishonest, pernicious, and self-serving," even a form of "symbolic violence" rooted in manipulation and deception often motivated by careers elsewhere.[20] In other words, participant observation during the Victorian era was generally self-serving for the European anthropologist and his or her institution in Europe and, hence, has been described as a form of "micro-imperialism."[21] Those studied, the alien cultures, were "used" as a means to an end. In the subsequent written and published accounts, complex, overdetermined, conflictual, multilayered and interactive indigenous relations (notwithstanding power differences with Western "experts"), often were reduced to a discrete, static but apparently authoritative composition by a single author.[22] In his work, especially Orientalism, Edward Said has questioned the uniformed whole of the traditional approach as well as the later symbolic perspectives which were contingent upon "dichotomizing" cultures into "we/they," with the "we" being the standard of measurement for "civilization" or historic movements toward civilizing.[23] This ultimately produced an "essentialized" account of all the other "theys." Western scholars assumed they were equally equipped to represent, in the same way, the Ashantes, the Dinkas, Tainos, Caribs, Mayans, Incas and Aztecs as if all of these "others" represented but one intelligible unity across cultures. Was there such a homogeneity or was diversity suppressed and a unity imposed by the external framework and assumptions? Traditionally, internal variations and even temporaral changes were conceived of as impurities which interfered with the researcher's ability to determine the "essence" of a culture and the "authentic" (and homogenized) indentity of the peoples being studied. Hence both the point and end result was to represent non-Western cultures as static, and locked in time and space.[24]

---

[16] Thomas McCarthy, "Doing the Right Thing in Cross-cultural Representation," Ethics 102 (April, 1992), 638.

[17] E.g. W.D. Ashcroft, Gareth Griffins, and Helen Tiffin, The Empire Writes Back; Theory and Practice of Post-colonial Literature (London: Routledge, 1989).

[18] Solid analyses of traditional anthropology include James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., Writing Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); and Clifford Geertz, Works and Lives (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

---

[19] McCarthy, "Doing the Right Thing," 637.

[20] Kevin Dwyer, Moroccan Dialogues (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1982), cited in Geertz, Works and Lives, 95-98.

[21] Geertz, Works and Lives, 95-98.

[22] Clifford, The Predicament of Culture, 25.

Following the great decolonization movements after World War II, a noticeable shift occurred in the style of cross-cultural representations. Ethnographic accounts encompassed new and interpretive ("symbols and meaning") approaches which sought to "read" cultural "texts" for their "meaning" and to engage in a "dialogue" with the "authors" of such cultural texts. The metaphor of reading other cultures was combined with the metaphor of dialogue or subject/subject engagements. This, of course, produced

---

[23] Said, Orientalism (New York: Pantheon, 1978); Clifford, The Predicament of Culture, 255-276.

[24] George E. Marcus and Michael M.J. Fischer, Anthropology as Cultural Critique (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 96.

virtual as opposed to *actual* dialogues. The Western interpreter retained her authoritative stature. However, the contestable nature of the cultural reading is acknowledged and it is fully anticipated that the former colonial objects will "talk" or "write back" although, paradoxically, there can be no requirement that what is written be read, that what is said be listened to and actually heard.[25] The more self-conscious intent was to undermine the passive or "object" role of the indigenous groups being studied by an active, outside "subject" which characterized Victorian anthropology. There was a noticeable shift away from behaviour to cultural symbols, languages, ways of life; a more hermeneutic approach on ethnography.

At least one feature of this shift was the undermining of the evolutionary schemas from the Victorian period as well as the absolutism and "God's-eye-view" objectivity assumed by classical realism.[26] A second and associated movement "was the cultural-political motif of recovering and redeeming authentic native cultures that had been beseiged and battered by colonial forces."[27]

---

[25] McCarthy, "Doing the Right Thing," 642.

[26] This gave rise to the "rationality and relativism" debates of anthropology perhaps best exemplified by the Popperian critiques of Peter Winch. This debate included the now familiar comparisons between magic or alchemy and science and myth and history. For a useful discussion: Bryan Wilson, ed., Rationality (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970); and Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes, Rationality and Relativism (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1982).

[27] McCarthy, "Doing the Right Thing," 638.

Enthnography was now understood as a potential tool for liberation and the notion of affirming "authentic" (pre-colonial) cultural traditions was a symbolic aspect of the ideology of many decolonization movements and subsequent postcolonial states. In academic circles, the logical, epistemological and methodological dilemmas of translating and interpreting across languages, beliefs and styles of reasoning dominated the debates of the 1970s and this continued into the 1980s.[28] These developments now lead me to consider the more recent developments in studying across cultural identities, especially indigenous peoples and Africans of the diaspora.

Over the last decade, most disciplines -- and political science is no exception -- have been influenced by what variously has been described as "reflexive," "deconstructionist" and "postmodern" theorizing. It is an approach wherein the new avant garde among cross-cultural analysts aspire to be even more self-conscious, more aware of the history of the discipline, the assumptions of the major paradigms and the shortcomings of past efforts to ascertain the meaning, intelligibility, differences in language, systems of beliefs and styles of reasoning.[29] The new "reflexive" approach is purported to be more aware of the context of writing and the diversity of audience. The new writing is not only for Western intellectuals but also sophisticated multicultural and non-Western audiences. Further, the rising number of intellectuals from former colonies, the "peripheries," are versed in the ways of the "metropolis" and seek to bring this awareness to their work, especially their critiques of Western capitalist societies. It is not enough simply to assume that Western assumptions are shared and that knowledge is produced in a one-way-mirror.

---

[28] Michael Krausz, ed., Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

[29] McCarthy, "Doing the Right Thing," 635.

Writing in this multicultural global intellectual sphere has become an unsettling experience, especially for traditional Western intellectuals who have been nurtured to believe that they, as inheritors of Western civilization, have attained the pinnacle of reason and reasonableness, the voice-of-God objectivity and an irrefutable scientific methodology. Such persons, exemplified by the growth of groups of "concerned scholars" in the United States and Canada, shudder at the "crisis of representation" in the "human sciences."[30] Not all of their concerns are unfounded as my discussion of postmodernism has pointed out. The shifts in approaches have benefitted from literary-critical studies and can be liberating. However, there are some serious moral-political problems which cannot be ignored. Below, I discuss some of the problems of postmodernism as an approach to history and second, offer elements for a political-moral alternative.

---

[30] See analysis of these developments in James Clifford, The Predicament of Culture (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 21-54.

First, among postmodern historians, if this itself is not an oxymoron, Nietzsche's rejection of a metanarrative, taken to an extreme, has become the prevailing orthodoxy. Nietzsche put the "subject-historian" at the centre; postmodernists see the writing of history as legitimating the subject's position or delegitimizing that of one's critics. This is in contrast to, for example, historian "historicists" such as Wilhelm Dilthey and Robin George Collingwood who at least theoretically saw the centre as occupied by those being studied. Further, Dilthey's hermeneutic approach was centred in an understanding of human consciousness (*Geist*) and lived experience (*Erlebnis*).[31] This was extended by Hans-Georg Gadamer and others who argued for the universality of hermeneutics by positing it as a fundamental aspect of human consciousness as expressed in language. Moreover, historicity was extended beyond historicism, that is, beyond the belief that the diversity of human civilizations required that the historian thought herself into the categories of those diverse civilizations in order to understand them. Gadamer also argued that the "prejudices" of the historian were not necessarily an obstacle to knowledge since it was part of historical consciousness and the stuff necessary to preserve historical connectedness, for the transhistorical bridging of horizons.

---

[31] William Outhwaite, "Hans-Georg Gadamer" in The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences, ed. Quentin Skinner (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 26-27.

Political historians did not commence engagement of history with a *tabula rasa*. Finally, Gadamer saw the study of the past not as a basis for resurrecting past civilizations but as a way of meditating upon the present. This is in contrast to postmodernists who seem to invert this relationship; the present is a way of meditating upon the past.[32]

A second problem with postmodernists' approach to history is that instead of a logical, coherent narration, information is recorded non-sequentially, arbitrarily, as though only tangentially -- if at all -- related. Third, they do not see the past peoples, cultures and so on as having an intelligible meaning which ought (can) be respected and recovered. For postmodernists and poststructuralists, all "authors" of cultural "texts" are "poststructurally dead," if not literally so.[33] As I have noted in Chapter I, the logical outcome of an extreme cognitive scepticism is that history, politics, philosophy -- all are reduced "to a dead level of suasive" effect wherein consensus-values constitute the only court of appeal.[34] The consequences of these developments for studying indigenous and

---

[32] Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, trans. W. Glyn-Doepel (London [1960], 1975), 150; and G.W.F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A. Miller (Oxford [1807], 1977), 456.

[33] For a critical assessment of these developments: Munz, "What's Postmodern, Anyway?," 342. It should be noted that Munz conflates postmodernism with poststructuralism. For an analysis of the difference, Norris, Uncritical Theory and Lazarus, "Doubting the New World Order," 94-138.

[34] Lazarus, "Doubting the New World Order," 128-129.

African identities, for recovering meaning, truths of lived experiences, and for engaging in historical demystifications, need to be more carefully reflected upon by those who paradoxically desire liberation but act/write in ways which undermine practical and philosophical elements of liberation: Jean-Francois Lyotard's extreme cognitive scepticism, Jean Baudrillard's deconstruction of public space into a multiplicity of images, or Paul de Man's analytic deconstruction which flirts unconscionably with nihilism.

Critics against objectification, appropriation, exclusion and the like are morally justified in maintaining this position. However, they apparently unconsciously presuppose an alternative or better way(s) of representation. That is, most desire a method which tries to approximate subject/subject interactions, respect for the cultures of others, inclusiveness and the recognition and reproduction of the voices of heretofore marginalized and silenced groups. In drawing attention to what he called the "willy-nilly" driven "universal impulse" of postmodernism, McCarthy argued that there is an implicit desire/need among some postmodernists for treating people along the line of Kant's *mundige*.[35] By this Kant meant that people should be treated as "mature and responsible" beings capable of insightful self-governance. McCarthy claimed that while cultural relativism was initially effective in exposing and negating Eurocentric universalism and giving voice to diversity, at this juncture what is needed is a powerful moral-political alternative such as a multicultural universalism. According to the latter, apparently different cultural norms or conventions which on the surface appear to elicit different behaviour might actually originate from a universal value, such as respecting persons, treating people as *mundige*. This probability can be ascertained by inquiring not into the surface behaviour so much as the justification of that behaviour and the end to which it is exercised.[36]

---

[35] McCarthy, "Doing the Right Thing," 644.

Developing and articulating a multicultural universalism would allow diversity to be respected without the present a priori assumption that a homogeneous universality, namely European, is "the best." Further, it remains possible to expose the different unequal positions occupied by diverse individuals and social groups and the moral problems of extreme asymmetries in power across cultures and various social formations. These asymmetries cannot be eroded simply by individualistic, even if self-conscious, experimentations with textual reproductions, whether "polyphonic" or "collaborative." In fact, as Talal Asad has argued, intercultural representations are often produced by Western intellectuals and in Western languages or in what might be termed "strong" and "weak" languages.[37] Moreover, these Western intellectuals are able to write precisely because they are part of and/or have mastered the hegemonic cultures such that they are not neutral. Thus, in order to seriously and successfully challenge Western cultural hegemony, there is a need for actual political work toward equality, for actual inclusion and for greater self-representations by persons within the peripheries such that actual contestations of Western representation can occur. In effect, it is not adequate to simply proffer negative criticisms or to have Western intellectuals engage in writing experimentations. These are not only pedagogic and epistemic concerns, but also moral. With this in mind, I now turn to my conceptual framework.

---

[36] **Peter A. Facione, Donald Scherer and Thomas Attig, Ethics and Society, 2nd. edn. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1991), 21-23.**

[37] **Asad, "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Anthropology," in Writing Culture, ed. Clifford and Marcus, 141-164; and his Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter (New York: Humanities Press, 1972).**

In this effort to recapture the past, to validate the experiences of indigenous and African peoples, I hope to rewrite a political history which *informs* and not one which attempts to *determine* human consciousness and the quest for *klauna iwanka* or indigenous autonomy. Reason at least necessitates the exposure of mental categories and material conditions of un-freedom: racial and national stereotypes, myths, lies, distortions, slavery, persecution, exploitation.

VI.4. Conceptual Framework: Marx, Freud, Marcuse, Gramsci

In this section I provide a framework for my examination of Nicaragua's indigenous and ethnic populations. It is a framework which weaves together a conception of historical materialism that allows for human agency and resistance, a political psychology of domination and liberation and particularly the influence of ideas and human agency on history. It is a framework which takes direction from the absence of, and efforts to redress, a developed individual and political psychology in the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky, that is, classical Marxists. Among those who have attempted to bridge this gap, at least two deserve further elaboration here: Herbert Marcuse and Antonio Gramsci.[38]

Among theorists of the left, Marcuse's writings were one of first efforts which seriously attempted to wed Marx and more accurately a Young Hegelian (or "early Marx") with Freudian psychoanalysis.[39] Marcuse attempted to reconcile historical materialism with psychoanalysis in Eros and Civilization. However, as subsequent critiques have pointed out, the end result of wedding Hegel and Marx to Freud is problematic.[40] Nevertheless, some of the questions he posed are useful for my concern with looking to the past in order to acquire knowledge about how the indigenous and ethnic populations of Nicaragua came to exist on the Atlantic Coast, to have the kind of political consciousness they exhibited during the Revolution and *Contra*/revolution and ultimately, to gain some insight into why they made the particular claims for *klauna iwanka* that they did in the 1980s. In addition to Marcuse, I examine Gramsci's ruminations on culture, ideology and the role of ideas in history, in his Prison Notebooks.[41] Gramsci's more limited adoption of psychoanalysis can provide invaluable insights for understanding the indigenous relations with the various European powers on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. In fact, European imperialism and colonialism on the Atlantic Coast produced a complex socioeconomic and cultural condition which is vastly different from that on Nicaragua's Pacific Coast.

---

[38] See also Georg Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); and Cornel West, The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought (New York: Monthly Review, 1991).

[39] See Marcuse, Eros and Civilization (Boston: Beacon, 1955); Erich Fromm, Beyond the Chains of Illusions, My Encounter with Marx and Freud (New York: Pocket Books, 1966); and Reuben Osborn, Marxism and Psycho-analysis (New York: Dell, 1967). I also should point out that I reject the notion of an epistemological schism in Marx's work.

[40] Alasdair MacIntyre, Marcuse (London: Fontana/Collins, 1970).

In the case of Marcuse, I think he recognized, like many other Marxists, the absence of a developed social and political psychology in Marx's writings. The articulation of the relationship between historical materialism and the human psyche or consciousness was important to counteract the crude materialism which denied human agency or reduced it to an automatic physiological response to changes in the modes and relations of production. However, in adopting and reinterpreting Freudian psychology, Marcuse accepted a number of assumptions that are questionable. He was correct to reject the assumption by "vulgar" Marxists that consciousness would somehow automatically arise from the economic processes which were thought eventually to lead to the demise of capitalism. For the most part, Marx's critique of capital and European material relations accurately captured the conditions of the time. Of course, there were some misjudgments and erroneous predictions which anti-Marxist detractors gleefully point to at every turn.

---

[41] On Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), and History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci, ed. Pedro Cavalanti and Paul Picchon (Saint Louis: Telos Press, 1975).

One notable error was Marx's belief that the working class would be the historical agents of change. This did not prove to be the case. In light of this, Marcuse was right to try and account for the quiescence of the working class (or any oppressed and exploited group who did not revolt). Further, Marcuse correctly claimed that under capitalism, domination and exploitation do not result exclusively from external economic relations. Rather, they also result from forms of consciousness which foster and preserve the status quo. These forms of consciousness are antithetical to liberation.[42] It was important and valuable to articulate more specifically the superstructure and, in particular, the dynamic relationship between material relations and the ideology which either sought to preserve those relations or to transform them in the interests of the oppressed and exploited. In trying to grasp anti-liberationist or status quo consciousness, Marcuse paradoxically turned to Freud and psychoanalysis; many of his Marxist contemporaries were critical of, and even hostile toward, psychoanalysis. One exception was Trotsky but he was more interested in psychoanalysis as therapy and not the metapsychological aspects.[43] Freud's theoretical writings and his political and civic activities were quite conservative and reflected a fear of revolution, the Commune and radical change, fears typically expressed among the French elites with whom he interacted while in Paris.[44]

---

[42] MacIntyre, Marcuse, 43.

Particularly problematic from a Marxist standpoint was Freud's adoption of the common French conservative dualistic demarcation between "civilization" and the "masses." The masses included the working class and were thought to be governed blindly by instinctual passions which, if left unrestrained, would destroy civilization. The latter was preserved by an elite who had renunciated instinctual pleasures. Thus with their libido now sublimated, they engaged in the construction of "high culture" and ultimately civilization.[45] What, then, does this mean if we extend the analysis internationally and consider imperialism? In this dualistic construct, European imperialists become the elite constructors of civilization and the others abroad, those who are blindly governed by passions, become the object of civilization. This reinterpretation of Marx, through Freud, clearly presents a dilemma for Marx and Engels' agents of change: the working class. The idea that imperialism would profit the enterprise of civilization, however, was quite compatible with Marx. In fact, in the introduction to this study, I argued that there is no contradiction with Marx in conceiving of peoples in the New World as backward, uncivilized and requiring of European intervention in order to develop, modernize and civilize.[46]

---

[43] MacIntyre, Marcuse, 41.

[44] MacIntyre, Marcuse, 43.

[45] MacIntyre, Marcuse, 44.

In colonial discourse, civilization excluded the indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans of the diaspora, those who were generally, although not universally, oppressed and exploited. Further, Marcuse, as did Freud, divided human history into two phases in the evolutionary historical movements toward civilization. The first phase lasted until the modern era. Marcuse argued that during this phase social domination was necessary to overcome scarcity and want as well as to lay the foundations for technological developments and ultimately abundance. Two observations can be made as it relates to the indigenous peoples of the Americas specifically. First, there was no scarcity, especially in the Americas among say the Chorotega of Nicaragua, the Tainos of Hispaniola, the Aztecs of Mexico or the Mayas of what is today Guatemala. Nor does it seem evident that domination was *necessary* for production. It may be argued that it was necessary for guaranteeing that those who produced (indigenous peoples and slaves) did not receive equal value for their work; it was necessary for exploitation. This is not the same claim as saying that domination as such was essential.

---

[46] Marx, "The British Rule in India," in Marx and Engels, Selected Works, 2 vols. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Press, 1962), v.1,

Second, there is no answer as to why a certain ethnicity or gender, and not another, was dominated. Was this a criterion of Nature, of historical materialism or human consciousness? Why did the European men, for example, dominate and exploit the indigenous peoples of the Americas, enslave Africans and subjugate European women? Although ill-founded biological and cultural supremacist answers have been proffered by various theorists, Marcuse himself does not provide an answer. It has been my own contention that social domination and exploitation of any group is a combination of material relations and human agency; domination in human relations is not a dictate of nature nor any God. Thus nations, classes and/or individuals dominate because they will it in order to acquire and or maintain privilege. This privilege is preserved by the systematic deployment of an ideology that nurtures people to accept social relations as they are on the assumption that it is immutable (science) and the best that is humanly possible (ethics). Or, the conditions are blamed on a God (divine destiny). If God is responsible, then social relations of domination and subordination cannot or should not be changed by human artifice. This suggests that the role of religion in justifying and maintaining inequitable relations, especially in Latin America, must be examined. It is my general belief that Marx's critique of the relationship of religion to oppression was most perceptive, if unsettling for the

---

345-358.

faithful.[47]

Marcuse claimed that out of necessity all human energies, and particularly sexual energies, were repressed and redirected toward work and economic production generally. The external social reality likewise was structured to reflect internal sexual repression and a form of asceticism. One resulting external and legal institution was the monogamous family. Marcuse argued that in the modern era continued sexual repression, and especially compulsory monogamy, was 'overplus,' excessive or what he called "surplus repression." Such repression was no longer necessary in an economic context of abundance. In order for "Man" -- following Freud as opposed to Marx's and Hegel's use of "Men" -- to liberate himself, Marcuse argued that sexuality had to be liberated. And herein lies another fundamental dilemma. If sexuality is liberated, how would this advance human development? What is a liberated sexuality and will the intended consequence be that people work harder, work less, are more conscious of the nature of work and social relations? Is this "the" raison d'etre of civilization, that in which human happiness lies? Again, Marcuse provides no answer. However, it is reasonable to presuppose that at some fundamental level a kind of internal repression does take place. Some might call this self-control, others might see it as the absence of sexual freedom. What this has to do with the restructuring of social relations based on the material economic conditions, if anything, is less clear. Nevertheless, what is most compelling about this idea is the recognition that sexuality and monogamous family relations are rooted in social constructions of necessity and not necessarily what *must be* essential as such. These relations are the product of human reason and thus can be revisioned from the same faculty and in the interests of certain material relations.

---

[47] See for e.g. "On the Jewish Question," in The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 26-52.

One final comment on Marcuse: in Eros and Civilization, Marcuse argued that "guilt" is the response of individuals who believe that they have transgressed some recognized norm, some fundamental taboo. In contrast, the absence of guilt either meant that people have not transgressed a recognized norm or that they have been socialized to not consciously recognize some things as reprehensible. For example, Christian immigrants to the New World sought human and religious freedom and saw the absence of these as morally problematic. Yet they enslaved and denied freedom of religion to indigenous peoples and Africans apparently without guilt or remorse. It was "normal" European behaviour but normalcy is not sufficient for making something *right* and *good*. The fact of normalcy of American slavery or Nazi genocide cannot alter the wrongness of those atrocities nor diminish the culpability of both the actual perpetrators and those who knew and chose not to act to stop slavery or genocide. There have been various efforts to understand the experience of guilt. Karl Jaspers' concept of "metaphysical guilt" might have been woven into a dialectic in order to better capture the relationship between material conditions and the mental and psychological experiences of persons living in those conditions. Perhaps. The notion of "metaphysical guilt" would be problematic for someone who adhered to a strict materialist conception (which would be non-Marxist).

Jaspers in "La culpabilite allemande" argued that among "Men" there exists a certain "solidarity through which each shares responsibility for every injustice and every wrong committed in the world, and especially for crimes that are committed in his presence or of which he cannot be ignorant."[48] To not act, to not attempt prevention or redress, to remain silent in the face of injustice and atrocities, is to be an accomplice for which one, as part of the circle of humanity, experiences guilt and remorse. Acts of comission and omission caused one to "feel guilty in a sense that cannot in any adequate fashion be understood juridically, or politically, or morally."[49] It is a guilt which weighs heavily on the conscience and cannot easily be expiated.

A similar line of argumentation was advanced by Aime Cesaire. In Discours sur le colonialisme, Aime Cesaire wrote that those who rationalize Nazism, who waited in some deluded hope that it would simply disappear, "they hide the truth from themselves."[50] Acts of omission in the face of such savagery in fact rendered the indeterminate as actors, as accomplices. As Cesaire put it, the Resistance notwithstanding, most Europeans only acted when they became its victims; before "they succumbed to it [Nazism], they exonerated it, they closed their eyes," they tolerated Nazism and hence they were fully culpable for the atrocities. For Cesaire, this responsibility for Nazism "wells from every crack in western Christian civilization."[51] In effect, both Jaspers and Cesaire attempted to assign a form of guilt-as-culpability upon those who violated a human norm. This assignment of culpability presupposed the possibility of rational consciousness and a community in which human agency and solidarity are taken seriously.

---

[48] Jaspers, "La culpabilite allemande," trans. Jeanne Hersch (60-61), quoted in Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 89.

[49] Jaspers, "La culpabilite allemande," 89.

[50] Cesaire, Discours sur le colonialisme (Paris: Presence

In trying to account for the experience of guilt or remorse after the violation of a recognized "norm," Marcuse posited the experience of guilt as a consequence of a pre-institutional condition akin to Thomas Hobbes' state of nature. In taking this position Marcuse adopted Freud who described two types of guilt: the first arose from the feelings which accompanied the fear or dread of an authority and the second, from the feelings of dread arising from the super-ego.[52] In the first instance a person renounces instinctual gratification by responding to an extraneous source who names

---

Africaine, 1956), 14-15.

[51] Cesaire, Discours sur le colonialisme, 14-15.

[52] Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, trans. Joan Rivere (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1958), 78-82.

(Hobbes' Sovereign?) various acts as "good" and "bad." There is no original evil (known in religion as "sin") and thus obedience is contingent upon fear of loss of love or support of those upon whom one is dependent. What is known as "badness," then, is whatever causes loss.[53] Consequently, people do many "bad" things as long as they are not at risk of being detected.

The second form of guilt arises from the internalization of the authority, and the development of the super-ego. Freud argued that in the first case, it might best be described as dread of loss or "social anxiety." However, at this "new level," it can be called "conscience and sense of guilt" and the experience of this leads the individual to press for punishment. The more self-righteous the person, the more suspicious their super-ego and the greater the sense of needing to be punished.[54] This is not necessarily the sign of a virtuous person. In repeating this relationship from a different angle, it might be stated that relations are characterized by the dictates of individual will and the rule of force; the strong survive. The Freudian social contract adopted by Marcuse, posited the transition as one from: (a) the renunciation of instinctual gratification (the pleasure principle) as a consequence of an external authority. The continued unrestrained pursuit of the pleasure principle in "civilized" society gives rise to an experience of guilt. These external prohibitions eventually are internalized and renunciation occurs as a consequence of dread of conscience, that is, the internalization of authority (habitual behavior). In effect, there is the establishment of taboos or mutually agreed upon obligations and finally the making of a social contract or the declaring of sacred and inviolable social institutions (reality principle).[55]

---

[53] Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, 78.

[54] Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, 79.

It should be recalled that for Marx, the nature of the social order, and the condition of the individual, are inseparable. Further, the primary explanatory power was derived from the social order. However for Freud, social phenomena and the character of the social order are explained via individual human nature. Although Marcuse does not adopt a Freudian individualism, his doctrine collapsed the distinction in a way which is perhaps best understood as a metaphor. That is, for Marcuse, the development of each individual recapitulates the history of the human race; the past history of human society and individual development apparently are completely mirrored.[56]

Freud's analysis, like Marcuse's, encountered the same difficulty as Hobbes did in Leviathan: how does the transition occur from a condition of force and the expression of personal will to one of legal and institutional arrangements in which promises are kept?

---

[55] See, Freud, Moses and Monotheism (New York, 1949), 129; and MacIntyre, Marcuse, 51-53.

[56] MacIntyre, Marcuse, 50-51.

Additionally, why were Europeans included in the contract but not indigenous peoples, the enslaved and/or European women for that matter? Even if we accept that Hobbes' state of nature is a metaphorical construct, as I do, and possibly so too was Marcuse's contract, this does not explain why Marcuse took this direction and how precisely it can be reconciled with a historical materialism grounded in concrete social relations. It is ahistorical. It cannot help us understand the actual material conditions of the past nor even a fundamental goal of Marcuse, namely the role of human agency in material relations. In terms of the future, there is also a problem. Once sexuality is liberated, and each "man" pursues "his" own mode of satisfaction, which Marcuse allowed for, why is it the case that this will not lead to conflict and ultimately new modes of domination? What prevents continued domination and exploitation?

Marcuse, like Marx, must presuppose the birth of a "new person," and one whose consciousness would lead to the control or, ironically, the internal repression of desires that conflict with the desires of others. He also presupposed a condition which is not characterized by scarcity, and which can fully and efficiently respond to all natural disasters which might lead to scarcity, unfulfilled needs and potential conflict. In fact, his future must be one characterized neither by conflicts between individuals and classes nor one which witnesses war between nations. Today, identity politics, the assertion of ethnic and cultural aspirations and nationalism are not exclusively about needs and material happiness. Rather, they are about freedom centred in specific historical identities, perhaps best anticipated by Marx's discussion of the possibility of Jewish freedom in a Christian state. This posed a fundamental contradiction since a part of Christianity is the negation of the Jew as a Jew.[57] Freedom for Jews required the unsettling of Christian hegemony in the same way that today African and indigenous freedom require the conscious displacement of European hegemony in the Americas. Thus, for example, an indigenous person cannot be free in America or Canada as long as it is presupposed that such states are European, and that what is European is white and Christian. To be a free Blackfoot or Navajo in such a context is an impossibility. The inability to grasp these antagonistic developments is a problem of Marcuse's more than Marx' and it arises from the former's collapse of the difference between "freedom" and "happiness."

Both Hegel and Marx saw human history as progressing toward freedom but Marx, more than Hegel, paid attention to human material needs in this process. Yet, in suggesting that "[M]ankind becomes free only when the material perpetuation of life is a function of the abilities and happiness of associated individuals," Marcuse ignored Marx's criticism of the utilitarian view of happiness.[58] In contemporary life, the pursuit of freedom inevitably produces conditions of frustration, sacrifice, disappointment, pain, in a word, unhappiness. Thus, Marcuse's collapse of "freedom" and "happiness" in Alasdair MacIntyre's view was "an abitrary intrusion and a gratuitous falsification of Marx."[59]

---

[57] Marx, "On the Jewish Question" in The Marx-Engels Reader, Robert Tucker, ed., 26-52.

[58] Marcuse, Reason and Revolution (New York, 1941), 293. Marcuse's view is closer to that of Karl Kautsky who was a utilitarian. See Kautsky's Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History, trans. John B. Asken (Chicago, 1907).

The presuppositions of abundance, efficiency and the absence of conflict are inadequately explained by Marcuse's discussion of sexuality and surplus repression. However, an explanation of such fundamental presuppositions is essential for assessing the validity and reliability of Marcuse's effort to wed Marx and Freud, historical materialism and psychoanalysis. Despite these problems, I think Marcuse was right to explore the interconnectedness between material economic relations and the cultivation or evolution of psychological attachments to, or alienation from, those relations. Recognition of these gaps in Marcuse leads me to briefly reflect upon another Marxist, Gramsci, and how he attempted to address precisely these concerns.

Perhaps more than any other Marxist since Frederick Engels, Gramsci took seriously and attempted to explicate the interwoven nature of economic, cultural and intellectual influences in maintaining what he called "hegemony." By the latter is meant not only economic and military power but also cultural, social and moral dominance. Those who have power must be able to get others to accept and sustain the prevailing social relations as opposed to critiquing and transforming those relations.

---

[59] MacIntyre, Marcuse, 37.

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels predicted the end of capitalism and an influential role for the proletariat. This did not come to pass even at what seemed like the most opportune moments: the 1870 or 1918-1919 recessions, the international economic crises of the 1930s and again after World War II, nor the 1973 economic crisis fuelled by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) reduction of oil supplies. The continuation of capitalism, especially in industrially advanced countries, led Marxists to try and explain why it did not (and does not) appear on the verge of disappearing. Since Marx and Engels, one Marxist has been most persistent in exploring this paradox and, according to the French Marxist Louis Althusser, that person was Gramsci. Much of Gramsci's writing was done while he was imprisoned by the fascist regime of Mussolini. These writings were in the form of notebooks and letters and, consequently, some key ideas and concepts lack precise and systematic development.[60] Nevertheless, there are several observations made by Gramsci which are useful to this present effort to understand Nicaragua's indigenous and ethnic population at the present conjuncture.

---

[60] Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971); and Gramsci, Letters from Prison, trans. Lynne Lawner (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

First, in developing his doctrine of hegemony, perhaps the most familiar of his major concepts, Gramsci suggested that a particular social and economic system, for example capitalist or fascist, can maintain its predominance and support not only because of economic and military power, but also because of its cultural, social and moral values.[61] Through persuasion, propaganda or political education (depending on one's point of view), one class -- and here I would add ethnicity and/or gender -- can rule over another by getting the ruled to accept its cultural and social values. In effect, the rulers persuade the ruled to accept and adopt the values of the rulers.

This view of Gramsci's harkens back to The Republic and specifically to the political cynicism of Plato's Thrasymachus, who claimed that in "every case the laws are made by the ruling party in their own interests" and further, what this ruling elite defined as "just" or "unjust" depended upon what was in their interests.[62] Thus, justice merely was the will of the stronger or more powerful. Such a view also is clear in the writings of Vladimir Lenin, especially his State and Revolution, in which he argued that the state is an organ used by the ruling class to preserve its domination and oppression of the working class.[63] Additionally, what was called "order" was that condition which allowed the unfettered preservation of the ruling class' systematic asymmetrical relations of power; "disorder" was any effort to transform these relations. Even variations in political leadership among competing elites do not disrupt the prevailing cultural, social and moral status of the dominant class.

---

[61] James Joll, Gramsci (London: Fontana/Collins, 1977), 8.

[62] Thrasymachus in Plato's The Republic, trans. F.M. Cornford (New York: University Press, 1945), 18.

[63] Lenin, "State and Revolution," in Social and Political

The more sophisticated the persuasion, as today Noam Chomsky persistently and perceptively articulates, the more likely it is that complete hegemony of one class over another can be exercised. Arguably at some point, the preservation of this hegemony becomes internalized and primarily one of habit and hence unconsciously maintained by those who are ruled and even those who rule, in a word, by the cultivation and preservation of false consciousness. As such, understanding the relationship of ethics, art, literature, education and philosophy, or more generally culture and ideas, to revolution was fundamental to Gramsci's thought and practice. In this chapter, I will show how a European hegemony over indigenous and enslaved peoples in the "New World" is beginning to unravel as a consequence of historical consciousness and a militant contestation of European hegemony, the subject matter of the section to follow.

Second, in considering the relationship between culture and politics, Gramsci rejected the one-to-one correlation between economic forces and ideas in history. Rather, he conceived of the

---

Philosophy, eds., J. Somerville and R. Santoni (Garden City: Doubleday [Anchor Books], 1965), 383.

relationship as dialectical: the economic forces influenced cultural, ideological and political movements which were, in turn, influenced by economic forces. In his writings Gramsci deployed three uses of "dialectic". In the first instance, his usage referred to the Greeks and specifically the Socratic dialogues. This usage is most evident in Gramsci's analysis of the fluid and interactive exchanges between intellectuals, the harbinger of political consciousness, and the masses, especially the workers. The second usage is evident in Gramsci's writings on historical development; the usage is more Hegelian and encompassed a triadic movement from thesis to antithesis and synthesis or the "negation of the negation."

The third usage of dialectic can be found in Gramsci's analysis countering the Soviet Marxist N.I. Bukharin's development of his theory of historical materialism. Bukharin attempted to articulate a scientific conception of historical materialism. However, as Gramsci read it, it was too mechanical and did not leave space for the influence of human agency and ideas on history. In the Prison Notebooks Gramsci claimed that the philosopher, "understood both individually and as an entire social group [organic], not only grasps the contradictions, but posits himself as an element of the contradiction and elevates this element to a principle of knowledge and therefore of action."[64] Economic explanations were necessary but not sufficient for understanding historical phenomena.[65] The philosopher had to grasp the changes in material economic conditions and how the latter influenced human consciousness and, in turn, was influenced by human consciousness. By consciously grasping these material changes, individuals could propel themselves into the dialectical process and history.[66] These dialectical processes resulted in a "historic bloc." The latter is created only when there is a dialectical relationship "between intellectuals and the people-nation" and this relationship resulted from an organic participation wherein "feelings and passion become understanding and thence knowledge."[67] Without this organic relationship and exchange, there is no true representation, no life in common and hence no social force or historic bloc.

---

[64] Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 404-405.

The difficulty was in ascertaining how those most alienated and disadvantaged by an hegemonic system would come to recognize and seek to transform the prevailing hegemony. For Gramsci, political education was paramount and in 1920 he wrote that revolutions are nurtured by insightful criticism and by the cultivation of a new cultural climate. This kind of revolutionary preparation, woven together with an education movement, "tends to the creation of a new civilization, of new attitudes of life and thought, of new feeling."[68] He goes on to say that "it does so by promoting among the class of manual and intellectual workers the spirit of enquiry in the philosophical and artistic field, in the field of historical investigation, in the field of the creation of new works of beauty and truth."[69] In effect, consciousness was not an automatic development; it was a condition that had to be carefully fostered and for Gramsci, "organic intellectuals" played a crucial role in this process. He argued that it was an "illusion of ideologists" to think that those reduced to a condition "of physical and spiritual slavery could embody a spontaneous historical development."[70] Only through disciplined, politically conscious workers could slogans be transformed into actual practice and responsible agents of revolution be ready to transform the wretched conditions of the masses. To not recognize this or to ignore it, was for Gramsci an "unconscious counter-revolution in advance."[71]

---

[65] Joll, Gramsci, 35.

[66] Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 469.

[67] Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 418.

In letters to his sister-in-law who remained in Italy during the fascist reign, and who provided him moral and political support, Gramsci sometimes deployed various Freudian psychoanalytic concepts including "unconscious" and "repression." This was especially the case in his discussion of "the dialectic of the human psyche."[72] This apparent acceptance of psychoanalysis was much more limited than that of Marcuse. Initially Gramsci thought that psychoanalysis was most advantageous for those persons referred to as "the insulted and injured" of modern life. However, he came to think that psychological crises at certain historic moments and in particular environments also affected those persons whose habits of living and old ways of thinking conflicted with the new demands made by a modern and revolutionary society. Habit and an historically cultivated status quo consciousness prevented such individuals from changing with the new demands; times changed but individual consciousness and habits remained static. Consequently, the crisis "can only be resolved in a catastrophic manner because it gives rise to morbid outbreaks of repressed passions."[73] For Gramsci, one only can reconcile some of the most absurd contradictions of modern life by "thinking 'historically', dialectically, and identifying one's own task with intellectual dispassionateness."[74] Thus where Marcuse sometimes posited an ahistorical conception of psychoanalysis, Gramsci more selectively deployed psychoanalysis as part of a historical and dialectical process.

---

[68] An unsigned article attributed to Gramsci dated December, 1920 in L'Ordine Nuovo (Turin, 1919-1920), quoted in Joll, Gramsci, 31.

[69] Gramsci, quoted in Joll, Gramsci, 31.

[70] Gramsci, "Discorso agli anarchichi," quoted in Joll, Gramsci, 53.

[71] Gramsci, quoted in Joll, Gramsci, 53.

With these insights in mind, I now shift my analysis to show the dialectical relationship between historical materialism, colonial discourse and European hegemony over the Americas. This will set the stage for understanding the complex relationship between various European powers and the indigenous and ethnic populations of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. It will be an important part of this section to deconstruct some of the common and sometimes truly absurd claims about indigenous peoples in colonial discourse, especially what has come to be known as the "discourse of cannibalism."[75] In particular, I plan to highlight precisely what those claims presupposed and what they obscured.

---

[72] Joll, Gramsci, 89.

[73] Gramsci, "Letter to Tatiana" (7 March 1932), trans. Hamish Henderson, The New Edinburgh Review, "Gramsci II" (1975), 12-13.

[74] Gramsci, "Letter to Tatiana" (March 7, 1932), 12-13.

VI.5. The Construction of European Hegemony

The *Contra*/revolution occurred in the midst of rigourous debate over what was then the impending 500th anniversary of the European conquest and colonialization of Latin America and the Caribbean. The significance of this historic moment was manifold. The most familiar tales repeated in order to generate historical memory actually began in childhood texts and continued with remarkable consistency into academic and "scholarly" texts. I highlighted "scholarly" to challenge the status of texts which ignored and obscured so much, texts which valorized "our" (European) ancestors who "discovered the New World" and literally demonized the original inhabitants of the Americans along with the enslaved peoples brought by the Europeans from Africa to the New World.

---

[75] E.g. Reay Tannahill, Flesh and Blood: A History of the Cannibal Complex (London: Abacus, 1975); William Arens, The Man Eating Myth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Mariana Torgovnick, Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

Columbus was indeed a colon to the relations of gross inequality left in the wake of conquest and colonization. The plan to commemorate 500 years brought the following to the fore: the historical memory of Columbus' departure for what he later called "the other world," the expulsion of Jews from Spain; the Catholic Inquisition's bigotry, intolerance and outright cruelty toward Jews, Moors and witches; the extermination of indigenous peoples and enslavement of Africans; and the appropriation of indigenous communal land.[76] This was a moment in history when European imperialism was used to structure immense disparities in power and wealth. Adam Smith in his seminal text The Wealth of Nations claimed that "[T]he discovery of America and that of a passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope are the two greatest and most important events recorded in the history of mankind."[77] Similarly, in The Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels concurred with Smith when they claimed that the conquest and colonization of the Americas and India by Europeans "opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The

---

[76] Jan Carew, "United We Stand! Joint Struggles of Native Americans and African Americans in the Columbian Era," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 103-127.

[77] Smith, The Wealth of Nations (New York: Random House, 1937), 590.

East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society."[78] Marx and Engels argued that in the place of feudal and patriarchal relations, the bourgeoisie, the modern capitalist, had substituted a "single, unconscionable freedom--Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation."[79] These developments were the genesis of liberal political economy, a development both Smith and Marx applauded with reservation and for different reasons. They were also the genesis of insurrections, resistance and revolutions against what became the interwoven imperial structure of capitalism, Christianity, slavery and colonization.

These developments structured immense inequalities in national political economies but also between the Europeans and the various indigenous peoples from Columbus' "other worlds." Smith hinted at this when he claimed that the benefits to be enjoyed from this development were not the same for the conquered and enslaved: "the natives...both of the East and the West Indies [Caribbean], all the commercialized benefits which can have resulted from those events have been sunk and lost in the dreadful misfortune which they have occasioned."[80] Benefits accrued to Europeans simultaneously produced a "dreadful" experience for the Americas, the Caribbean, India and China. Samir Amin was more specific when he argued that the conquest and colonization were "military, economic, political, ideological, cultural, and even, in a certain sense, ethnic" and today, it "remains...what it has been for five centuries, a system based on capitalist exploitation and the inequality of nations."[81] The conquest and colonization established a European hegemony over the Americas.

---

[78] Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," Selected Works, v.1, 35.

[79] Marx and Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," 36.

In light of these claims of liberals and Marxists alike, Bill Bigelow argued that it is important that this history not be written exclusively or even primarily from "the perspective of the historical winners."[82] However, there are reasons for not teaching other perspectives on colonial history and according to Hans Koning, those reasons are both psychological and political. Koning argued that the "myth of Columbus as the lone hero is interwoven with the lore and the myths of this country [the United States], of its innate goodness, and of the superiority of white civilization."[83] The self-understanding of Americans is very much tied to the myths spawned during the colonial era. In his view, it would produce a national psychological crisis to unravel what that myth obscured. Aime Cesaire suggested that along with capitalist greed, the Catholic Church was equally implicated in the simplistic dualism between savagery and civilization. He suggested that the Church was responsible for "the dishonest equations Christianity=civilization, paganism=savagery, from which there could not but ensue abominable colonist and racist consequences."[84] Moreover, the mythologizing of European Christian goodness and superiority, taken to its logical conclusion in Nazism, is also "the basis of our [United States] patriotism (or jingoism) which takes the place of ideology and is meant to create the American consensus."[85] Even the very idea of what constitutes "American" remains tied to European and Christian despite the so-called "melting pot." If it is presupposed that European is white, then logically American must be white. It also follows that an "American consensus" is invariably antithetical to the recognition and value of what is indigenous, African and/or Jewish, the latter symbolizing non-Christians. In the context of this grand distortion, to accept "the silences of the defeated," is to accept, in Bigelow's view, a two-tier representation of humanity

---

[80] Smith, The Wealth of Nations, 590.

[81] Amin, "1492," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 10, 19.

[82] Bigelow, "Two Myths," 30.

[83] Koning, "Rewriting Our History," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 22.

---

[84] Cesaire quoted in Carew, Fulcrums of Change: Origins of Racism in the Americas and other Essays (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1988), 28.

[85] Koning, "Rewriting Our History," 22.

-- those who are significant and the others, those who are insignificant. The silence becomes but a grand "metaphor of domination and subordination."[86]

Christianity was represented as the moral economy which "naturally" accompanied liberal political economy. However there was a hugh schism between the moral language and the political economic practices of conquest. The disjuncture remains and today continues to produce innumerable contradictions. In the colonial era, the same European men who espoused universal human values also massacred indigenous peoples; owned slaves, many of whom were treated with inhumane brutality; and they also subjugated women. The very eloquent defenders of freedom were, paradoxically, the same men who fathered a social condition in which indigenous peoples, African-Americans, Jews and/or women would exist in a condition of un-freedom. Further, this contradiction is inherent to, and inseparable from, Christianity in the colonial and modern world. One example which stands out for the paradox of human brutality and ostensible Christian virtue was the treatment of the Pequot peoples by the Puritan settlers in New England. When the British realized that they could not defeat the Pequots, they decided to burn down an entire village, massacring some 700 people. The Puritans apparently assauged their conscience by claiming (and believing) that it was God's will and therefore their actions were above human responsibility and beyond human blame:

---

[86] Bigelow, "Two Myths," 30.

> Those that scaped the fire were slain with the sword; some hewed to peeces, others rune throw with their rapiers, so as they were quickly dispatchte, and very few escaped....It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fyer, and the streams of blood quenching the same, and horrible was the stincke and sente there of, but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and *they gave the prays thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them*...a victory over so proud and insulting an enimie [emphasis added].[87]

This disjuncture between moral language and practice can be grasped only through a critical interrogation of the material practices of European men in the Americas. The practices by the Puritans, for example, are far from the elevated moral status assigned to the Europeans in texts and colonial discourse. Another contradiction between moral language and material practices could be seen in the ideology rationalizing enslavement and imperialism which also emerged from the New England Puritans. As Joel Kovel put it, "the signature of conquest" in the name of civilization was "forged in the development of Christendom" and applied to those encountered in the New World.[88] In Colonial Encounters Peter Hulme noted that the Puritans' self-understanding was one of "righteousness under threat from savagery."[89] Moreover, in Chapter V it was pointed out that the Christian schema established basic dichotomies in which the Caucasians from Europe were holy, white and "civilized" and those of different skin colours were heathens, dark and pigmented and "savage."[90] This view of liberating savages apparently absolved Europeans of their guilt for an often brutal encounter. The psychology of conquest was inextricably tied to Europeans convincing themselves (delusion/false consciousness) that the "uncivilized" or "subhuman" status of indigenous peoples and Africans justified un-civil behaviour and, in fact, that morality or benevolence *necessitated* intervention in the form of conquest. There was no guilt, no bad conscience, no regret. Similarly, by demonizing Jews, witches and the disabled, by associating them with a mythical "devil," Christians apparently could maintain an easy conscience for those they over-worked, condemned to be burned at the stake, or buried alive.

---

[87] William Davis, ed., Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1946), 339-340.

[88] Kovel, "Naming the Conquest," 50.

[89] Hulme, Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean

VI.6. Either/Or Naming: Civilization and Cannibalism

In light of these practices, Kovel argued in "Naming the Conquest," that no person with a historical consciousness would have seriously contemplated celebrating the 500th anniversary of western imperialism. Instead, he suggested there was a need to "commemorate

---

1492-1797 (New York: Methuen, 1986), 139.

[90] Hulme, Colonial Encounter, 6.

acts of resistance--including the works of intellectuals who have undertaken the critiques of empire."[91] Toward this end, Kovel analyzed several excellent historical and literary works on the Columbian era. This analysis covered Hulme's Colonial Encounters and Francis Jenning's The Invasion of America.[92] Hulme, for example, looked at texts as diverse as Columbus' journals, William Shakespeare's The Tempest and William Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. Both Jennings and Hulme recognized the inseparable nature of the process which led to colonization on the one hand, and that which allowed the Europeans to "name" the experiences and to represent them as they willed, on the other hand. In fact, part of the subtitle of Jennings' text is "the Cant of Conquest." By using "cant" -- which variously means "to tilt; slant" or "[T]he hypocritical expression of pious sentiments; insincere religious or moralistic talk...secret jargon of thieves"[93] -- Jennings, in a word, conveyed part of his criticism of the colonial naming. The pious language was hypocritical; it obscured the actual brutality and genocide of the conquest and colonization experiences for the indigenous groups and the enslaved.

As Hulme read the texts, in the light of the historical experiences, the encounters were formalized in the discourses of colonialism, which advanced the "justifications" for enslavement and for preserving the economic and territorial benefits of conquest. From this eventually followed what he called the European "mentality of conquest and racial superiority."[94] Of particular note is what he called the "discourse of cannibalism." The words cannibal and cannibalism appear in numerous European texts to signify the European colonizers' view of, and relation with, indigenous peoples. However, reference to the actual practice as such can be seen in Christian accusations against Jews prior to there being a specific word like "cannibalism" to signify feasts involving the eating of human flesh and drinking of human blood.[95] It is doubtful that either of these usages are coincidence. Hulme somewhat amusingly observed that the Europeans had a remarkable "predisposition for finding 'cannibalism' in all non-European [and non-Christian] parts of the world."[96] There is scant evidence to support the claims of systematic cannibalism by the groups so characterized.[97] This requires further elaboration.

---

[91] Kovel, "Naming the Conquest," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 49.

[92] Jenning, The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest (New York: Norton, 1976).

[93] Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, Canadian Edition (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 1974), 200.

First, the originator of the word "cannibalism" is Columbus himself. It initially represented a bizarre anagram of *Carib*

---

[94] Kovel, "Naming the Conquest," 50.

[95] Kovel, "Naming the Conquest," 54.

[96] Hulme, Colonial Encounters, 81; and Kovel, "Naming the Conquest," 54.

[97] Kirkpatrick Sale, Conquest of Paradise (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990); and Carew, Fulcrums of Change.

Indians, the original inhabitants of the Caribbean, and the Great *Khan* of the Orient.[98] In colonial discourse, the Caribs are often posited as having an insatiable desire for human flesh. In an analysis which combined an appreciation of language with historical materialism and psychoanalysis, Kovel suggested that this might be a case of *projection*. By this psychoanalytic concept he meant to depict a mental distortion of actual events which occurred and allowed some persons to rationalize their own desires. Columbus' cannibal was not only a false representation, it was also a systematic mental reversal of who desired what. Kovel described it succinctly as a "twofold process of distorted consciousness" which occurred as a consequence of the calculated will to colonize and the disquieting fact of tremendous brutality and inhumanity in the process. It resulted in, "subjectively, a state of *projection*, in which one's own repudiated impulses are perceived as coming from the object of those impulses," meaning in this case that Columbus' cruelty (to New World peoples), his insatiable and unfilled desires (for gold and commodities) were falsely perceived to be coming from the Caribs and the Great Khan, among others. Critical assessments of the nature and activities of the various indigenous peoples do not support Columbus claims.

A second result was that "discursively, [there was] an anchoring of these notions in a set of culturally approved narratives to give a veridical reality to what would otherwise be a state of delusion...The dilemma is resolved: it is the savages' fault they are to be conquered; the way to the White Man's Burden has been cleared."[99] The "savages," by virtue of being savage, apparently compelled the Europeans to burden themselves; the victims thus are blamed for being victimized. It was, after all, the white Europeans who had an insatiable desire for New World possessions: was this "their" nature, the impulse of capitalism, an inherent psychology of possessive individualism and capitalist acquisition? This construction of events also has been decribed as one of paranoia, by which is meant a disjuncture between the perceiving subject and the reality which s/he perceives.[100] Further, those things which the ego, the internal reality as such, conceives as "noxious" within itself "is then projected onto external objects: the 'subject' thus endows the external world with what it takes to be its own worst tendencies and qualities."[101]

---

[98] Kovel, "Naming the Conquest," 54.

This distorted naming of events must be put in historical perspective: it was, in fact, Columbus who was impatient with his inability to reach India. When he landed on Guanahani (Bahamas), which he renamed San Salvador, he thought he had reached India. The name "Bahamas" also originates from Columbus' description of the islands' waters as *baja mar* or shallow sea.[102] He also renamed the geographic area the Indies, hence the otherwise unintelligible notion of the "West Indies" to connote the Caribbean in contrast to "East Indies" to connote India and Asia Minor. In addition, the word "Indian" was used to connote all the multiple indigenous peoples of the Americas and the Caribbean, again on the assumption that he had reached India. Thus, the language of ethnicity, and even of geography, were greatly influenced and distorted by Columbus.

---

[99] Kovel, "Naming the Conquest," 53.

[100] Paul Smith, Discerning the Subject (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 95.

[101] Smith, Discerning the Subject, 95-96.

Third, Hulme's discussion of cannibalism is particularly illuminating in this regard. Hulme described cannibalism as "the central regulating mechanism of colonial discourse."[103] The relations between the indigenous peoples and the Europeans were *managed* and shaped through the discourse of cannibalism. Cannibalism was deployed as a mechanism of differentiation, of oppositionality and as a means of establishing inside/outside boundaries. Or as Hulme's put it, the "boundaries of community are often created by accusing those outside the boundary of the very practice on which the integrity of that community is founded."[104] One of my arguments below will be that one of the preeminent rituals of Christendom was, minimally, a metaphorical representation of cannibalism. How else is it possible to account for the remarkable frequency with which cannibalism appears in colonial discourse by persons who have never witnessed such events?[105] Very probably, the preoccupation with consuming the body was more a fixation emerging from repressed Victorian sexuality than it was a cultural practice of so-called "primitive" peoples.

---

[102] Carew, "United We Stand!," 112.

[103] Hulme, Colonial Encounters, 85.

[104] Hulme, Colonial Encounters, 85.

Hulme's discussion of the colonial *inversion* as manifested in Defoe's Robinson Crusoe is also useful for grasping the distorted naming and narration of conquest. Consider for a moment what the Europeans acquired from the Caribs in terms of skills and language. This included the culinary skill of barbecuing and the correlate word "barbecue" but also words like "canoe" and canoe-building; these are Carib words and practices. In fact, the Caribs were renowned shipbuilders. This fact makes good sense given their voyages from South America to the Caribbean islands via such canoes. Yet, in the text Robinson Crusoe, Defoe depicted Friday, the Carib, as learning to barbacue and to build a canoe *from Crusoe*, the European. Thus Defoe appropriates the very cultural practices for which the Caribs were renowned, inverted the relationship, and then posited Friday as learning to be a better cuisinaire, horticulturer and shipbuilder from the person who, in actuality, had to learn those skills from Caribs. This distortion led Hulme to reflect upon the irony and the tragedy of a textual representation wherein the "'ignorance' of the savage Caribs is *produced by* the text of Robinson Crusoe, which enacts a denial of those very aspects of Carib culture from which Europe had learned."[106] In this respect, the ostensible savagery and ignorance of indigenous groups were manufactured representations.

---

[105] In The Man Eating Myth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), William Arens disputes the existence of cultures who engaged in systematic practices of cannibalism; as well, Kirkpatrick Sales, The Conquest of Paradise (New York: Knopf, 1990). This claim is disputed by Peggy Reeves Sanday in Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Fourth, in Kovel's view, the unsubstantiated use and repetition of cannibalism is not innocent nor is it used simply to connote the general understanding of the term as one meaning the eating of human flesh. Rather, cannibalism is used to connote "unspeakable crimes involving the use of human flesh and blood."[107] In this way, the Europeans sought to differentiate themselves, and especially Christianity, from the indigenous peoples and any ceremonial practices which might have involved human sacrifices. It is, after all, Christianity which mythologized the eating of flesh and blood in religious rituals; bread is meant to signify Christ's body and wine Christ's blood during communion and especially at Easter. In addition to its reflection in Christian religious rituals, the preoccupation with cannibalism was also taken up by Freud and the ostensibly "value-free" discourse of psychoanalysis.

Fifth and related, Freud's "oral-cannibalistic libido" is supposed to connote a natural and self-subsisting instinctual phrase in libidinal development. Given the absence of actual case studies or scientific evidence corroborating the existence of widespread cannibalism except metaphorically among Christians, this raises interesting questions about science and discourse. In reflecting upon the idea of "instincts" in The Age of Desire, Kovel suggested that, to some degree, an apparently scientific discourse like psychoanalysis can be the product of a colonial mind. That is, concepts like "instincts" and "cannibalism" are themselves the product of speech and are constructed out of language which, in turn, are influenced by (colonial) history and subsequent material and ideological relations. From this viewpoint, it is quite conceivable and probable that experiences from the history of colonialism and perhaps of the rise of Christendom, were unconsciously incorporated into Freud's theory and Freudian psychoanalytic discourse.[108]

---

[106] Hulme, Colonial Encounter, 210-211.

[107] Hulme, Colonial Encounters, 85.

Finally, by way of summary, Hulme's discussion of the reasoning in the discourse of colonialism is useful. Hulme argued that there were really four main claims made by colonists to justify the Europeans' dispossession of indigenous peoples. First, colonists argued that the indigenous people had not properly "settled" the land, meaning they had no conception of private property. Europeans had come to base their mode of production primarily on individual as opposed to communal ownership of property as found among the indigenous peoples of the Americas. One of the most renown philosophical defenses of this prevailing view of property is John

---

[108] See Kovel, The Age of Desire (New York: Pantheon, 1981); and his "Naming the Conquest, 59n4.

Locke's Second Treatise on Government.[109] The colonists claimed they encountered wilderness, not private property; apparently there were only two possibilities. In countering this European claim, Jennings argued that they were "incapable of conquering true wilderness, the Europeans were highly competent in the skill of conquering other people, and that is what they did. They did not settle virgin land. They invaded and displaced a resident population."[110] However, by calling that resident population "savage," "ferocious" or "wild," the latter were denied their humanity, and thereby, rendered morally insignificant. Moreover, to enter the circle of humanity from which they linguistically had been excluded, the indigenous peoples had to become like Europeans: individualistic, private property owners and Christian. The further they were from this socially created norm, the further they were from acquiring the status of humanity. Paradoxically, to accept the latter was to deny their own identity, to negate their own history and accomplishments and, in the end, they would never be good enough because they were not authentic Europeans, not white and so not inherently good. Even David Hume was susceptible to this reasoning.

His essay "On National Character," was based upon a geographical and racialized civilization construct. Hume claimed "I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or speculation."[111] Hume earlier had claimed that in temperate climates the national character was characterized by promiscuousness. In subsequent analysis, he claimed that Negroes worldwide were inferior because there was (to his limited knowledge) none among them who were ingenious, who produced arts or sciences or distinguished themselves in the professions. Notwithstanding the irony of the assumption that in the colonies "Negroes" could exercise their talents freely, despite colonial control, Hume moves from this position to what only could be termed blind ethnocentricism. When he learned about Negroes with talents, Hume trivialized those talents. For example, when he heard about the talents and learning of a former African slave in Jamaica, Hume claimed that "it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly."[112] This is somewhat ironic given the fact that learning among human beings is partly influenced by imitation or what Hume more perjoratively described as "parroting." It can be presumed that by "Negroes" Hume meant to connote Africans but, where he discussed separately the German, Spanish, Italian, British -- that is, Europe

---

[109] Locke, The Second Treatise of Government, ed. Thomas P. Peardon (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc., 1952), esp. Chap. III, "Of Property" and Chap. XVI "Of Conquest."

[110] Jennings, The Invasion of America, 15.

---

[111] Hume, Essays: Moral, Political and Literary (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1963), 213n1.

[112] Hume, "On National Character," 213; and Hiro, Black British, White British, 1-25.

-- he demonstrated no *knowledge* of the differences between, for example, Ashanti, Fanti, Oye or Hausas; cultures and "civilizations" were reduced to a homogenized racial demarcation.[113] Some might argue that this was merely sloppy research, prejudice, beliefs. However, the ethnocentric aggrandizement of Europe, and especially of Britain, was part of a larger picture which taken together distorted any rational assessments of the merits of a multicultural universe.

A second claim made by the Europeans was that the land was not used "wisely," meaning it was not cultivated precisely the way Europeans preferred. The nonsensical nature of this claim becomes evident upon closer examination. It presupposed that all the land ought to be cultivated all the time; it presupposed poor land management and/or waste since "more" cultivation would have meant a greater quantity than could be used by those concerned. It is today a tragicomedy that the environmental movement is based partly on an ancient indigenous principle the European colonizers, in the tradition of Francis Bacon, rejected: living in harmony or balance *with* nature as opposed to dominating nature. The claim is also a denial of indigenous accomplishments. When the Europeans ventured into the Americas, the indigenous groups already had domesticated and come to use the properties of some 400 separate species of plant life, including the ones commonly mentioned such as corn (or maize), beans and potatoes. As well, those less often mentioned include: tomatoes, chili, pineapples, peanuts, avocado and tobacco. None of these were known to the European continent prior to conquest and colonization.[114] This led to the doubling of food supplies available on the European continent. Moreover, at least 50 per cent of the agricultural products cultivated in the modern world were first domesticated by the indigenous peoples of the New World.[115] At that time, these groups were also growing and weaving cotton, making pottery and a variety of handicrafts. In effect, the productive and creative energies were as "advanced," if not more so than in many European centres. Eventually these became the food supplies and goods which the Europeans initially ate and wore in order to survive. They were ultimately appropriate for export to their original homeland.

---

[113] For an introduction to these groups, see W.W. Claridge, A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti (London, 1915); Wilfred Cartey and Martin Kilson, The African Reader: Colonial Africa (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), esp. discussions of the resistance to British, French, Italian and German efforts of conquest (3-46).

Third, Europeans accused the natives of behaving in a "duplicitous and treacherous fashion." In fact, many books on the conquest and colonization romanticized the Spanish and British and demonized the indigenous peoples during the various encounters. This is a myopic view since it is primarily through duplicity that indigenous groups throughout the Americas were deprived of their land and today are having to file land claims in order to recover them.[116] Finally, Hulme considered the fourth claim of the colonist, namely that the various natives "cruelly broke the universal rules of inhospitality."[117] There is a wide body of evidence which this claim simply ignores. Two stand out as indicative of conquest and colonization.

---

[114] George Novack, Understanding History: Marxist Essays (New York: Pathfinder, 1972), 51. It should be pointed out that I reject Novack's defense of slavery and conquest as *necessary* to capitalism.

[115] Novack, Understanding History, 51-52.

The first example which challenges the claim that the natives were untrustworthy can be drawn from the Caribs on San Juan de Puerto Rico. According to Herrera, himself a supporter of Spanish policies premised on racial superiority, "[T]he King had sent the force of two ships to make war on the Caribs...it was the general opinion [European] that the troubles [resistance] on the islands were caused by black slaves, Wolofs and Berberici."[118] The Wolofs were the inhabitants of Puerto Rico and the Berberici were North African Moslems who had been enslaved and brought to the New World via Spain. The Spanish King sanctioned war against escaped black slaves, Wolofs and Berberici simply because they refused to be subjugated by Europeans. Acts of war in defense of enslavement can hardly be described as "hospitable." In a later chronicle, Herrera claimed that

---

[116] For e.g. see Carlos Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity: Capitalist Modernization and Revolutionary Change on the Atlantic Coast (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989); and Henrietta Buckmaster, The Seminole Wars (New York: Collier Books, 1966), 7.

[117] Hulme, Colonial Encounters, 166-167.

[118] Herrera quoted in Carew, "United We Stand!," 109.

"[T]he Wolofs of San Juan were declared to be haughty, disobedient, rebellious, and could not be taken to any part of the Indies without express permission."[119] The Spanish King was concerned with the alliances between "fugitive 'Negro' slaves [who] were teaching disobedience to the 'Indians' and could not be recaptured."[120] According to Herrera's own account, it was only after the Spanish attempted to conquer the indigenous groups that some aligned themselves with escaped slaves and resisted in order to preserve their freedom. Ironically, those who wanted to preserve their freedom were called troublemakers. In the next chapter I will explicate how the Caribs came to exist on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast as a consequence of a similar form of colonial conceptualization and practice.

Consider a second example. In 1552, Bishop Bartolome de Las Casas wrote his Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies.[121] It is one of the early commentaries on the brutality of conquest and colonial practices, especially of Columbus' Spanish entourage. In recounting the Spaniards landing on Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic), he wrote:

> Into this sheepfold, this land of meek outcasts came some

---

[119] Herrera quoted in Carew, "United We Stand!," 109.

[120] Basil Davidson, "Columbus, the Bones and Blood of Racism," Race & Class 33, 3 (January-March, 1992), 18.

[121] See also Las Casas in Andre Collard, trans. and ed., History of the Indies (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

> Spaniards who immediately behaved like ravening and famished wild beasts...with the strangest and most varied methods of cruelty, never seen or heard of before...I have not described the thousandth part of what the Indians endured.[122]

It is worth noting that Las Casas described the Tainos as "meek" and the Spaniards as "wild beasts." It was the Spaniards who did not allow for "hospitality." They wanted gold, food and sex and according to Las Casas, they stole, plundered and raped to obtain their unrestrained desires; they behaved like wild beasts. When these accounts are correlated with my earlier example of the Puritans in New England, the very idea of inhospitality becomes suspect. In the immense majority of cases, when the Europeans arrived in the New World, they were dependent upon indigenous civilizations for food, clothing, shelter, medicine, in short, for survival. In considering the general claims of the Europeans, Kovel posited a counter-claim, namely that if "there was a 'wilderness' for the colonists, it was not geographical...but moral; and it was moral, ultimately, not for abstract or existential reasons, but because the loftiness of the Europeans could not be reconciled with the fact that they set out to steal and otherwise expropriate native lands."[123] Hulme was equally forceful in his rejection of the four claims:

> These claims were not only false, they were a systematic reversal of the actual state of affairs, since the native

---

[122] Las Casas quoted in Koning, "Rewriting Our History," 21.

[123] Kovel, "Naming the Conquest," 56.

> Americans were fully settled, farmed the land intensively, acted hospitably until provoked beyond endurance, and behaved in what, even at this distance and without sympathetic evidence, appears as a relatively consistent and comprehensible manner...the claims were a systematic projection of *European* behavior on to native Americans.[124]

However it was that people came to live with the horror of certain aspects of the conquest, it is important to be cognizant of the nature of historical experiences and practices. It is important to be conscious that the ascription of names to certain experiences can inform consciousness in deleterious ways. As Hulme articulated it, the dominant European naming has produced a "history" in which "the violent dispossession of the native Americans is rewritten as a crusade against the unregenerate savage, the guilt of conquest being transferred from usurper to usurped: as from Prospero to Caliban."[125]

This recognition leads me to a more careful examination of what Bill Bigelow named the "discovery myth" and the "encounter/exchange myth" and Robert Shaffer's dispute of "myth"; Shaffer preferred the more "neutral" use of "paradigm" and "model."[126]

---

[124] Hulme, Colonial Encounter, 166-167.

[125] Hulme, Colonial Encounters, 168.

[126] Bill Bigelow, "Two Myths Are Not Better Than One," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 28-48; Robert Shaffer's response to Bigelow, "Exchange\Encounter Theory and Myths of America," (40-47); and Bigelow's, "A Response to Robert Shaffer"(48-51), Monthly Review 44, 7 (December, 1992).

VI.7. Myths or Paradigms?: Discovery and Exchange/Encounter

Both Bigelow and Shaffer's articles emphasized the centrality of historical, and more specifically national-cultural, memory for consciousness and for progress toward human freedom. What the previous analysis has shown, is that central to this consciousness is the act of naming and of managing the social, material and discursive relations. As Kovel aptly explained, "naming differs from other forces of production like technology in that its deeper effects are invisible. This is because consciousness is channeled by naming," that is, "by the interconnected webs of names called discourses."[127] These discourses, once produced, are assumed to be the result of rationality and God's-eye-view objectivity. Their assignment of rationality and light to one set of actors and irrationality and darkness to other actors become as reified "truth," the actual contestation of which rarely occurs. Although the contours of these discourses might be modified periodically, such discourses rarely have been so fundamentally challenged as since the advent of deconstructionism. To the extent that discourses cannot be destroyed, then it must be the case that they are taken to be Truth, and of course, this is precisely what this study has sought to undermine through critical analysis.

What seemed most clear in the exchange between Bigelow and

---

[127] Kovel, "Naming the Conquest," 52.

Schaffer is not so much that they disagreed about the actual experiences of conquest and colonization or even what rectificatory justice might require. Their disagreement was primarily a conceptual one. However, it was fundamental because *how* the experiences are conceptualized influences not only the nature of consciousness, but also revolutionary practice. The disagreement, then, is more fundamental than first might appear. In order to contextualize this exchange, it is useful to discuss what Bigelow called the "discovery myth" or what Shaffer called the "discovery model." Bigelow's uses of "myth" was meant to conceptualize the European discursive representation of their relations with indigenous peoples as "fictitious," "imaginary," as collective beliefs constructed upon false premises, and which produced a story based upon fallacious reasoning.[128] Except, unlike Plato's allegories or biblical parables, these mythical tales are taken literally, as an expression of Truth; because they are not grounded in actual social or material relations, they produced distorted historical consciousness, what Marx called "phantasms of the brain." In contrast, to use "model" which Schaffer considered more "neutral," is to demoralize the conceptualization. Yet, a model is usually taken to mean a "pattern, example, or standard that is or may be used for imitation or comparison."[129] It is a conceptual mechanism whereby data, information, principles are "arranged mathematically, so as to represent or describe a certain thing, idea, or condition."[130] To use "model" in this sense is not to use a neutral conceptualization since the very notion of model is one which invites replication and imitation because of its ostensible ability to reproduce scientific (mathematical) certainty. That being said, it is useful to consider Bigelow's critique of "discovery" and "exchange/encounter" and where I think Schaffer's rebuttal is useful. Ultimately I accept the language of "exchange/encounter" although my analysis will continually show, as Bigelow argued, the systematically unequal relations between the Europeans and the various indigenous groups.

---

[128] Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, 896.

[129] Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, 870.

According to commentaries which represent the European movement to the Americas as a discovery (of Amerigo Vespucci), Christopher Columbus is portrayed as "handsome, determined, resourceful, brave, skillful, and reverent,"[131] a man who faced the odds to chart and discover the unknown. Upon arriving in what he called "America" he claimed it for the Spanish Empire and Christendom. There are, however, contradictions in this particular story about Columbus. First, Columbus' "legendary greed--he referred to his quest for gold hundreds of times in his journals and letters--is turned into a supreme virtue, a mere analogue to his enterprising spirit and his role of savior for European civilization."[132] Instead of his overriding greed being represented as the raison d'etre for his voyages, we have United States president George Bush describing Columbus as a "skilled and courageous navigator who discovered America and brought to our ancestors the promise of a New World....Generations of American entrepreneurs and business people have likewise accepted great risks in order to pursue their dreams."[133] There are two observations which must be made about this claim. One, by "our ancestors" Bush did not mean Native nor African Americans since neither group would associate Columbus' voyages with a "promise" or a "dream." Two, Bush only could reconcile this view (unless we concede that entrepreneurship is about greed and brutality), if he systematically repressed the facts about colonial practice and even the content of Columbus' actual journals. Second, then, the myth does not capture what John Bellamy Foster called the "real Columbus story," which in his view was "a tale of bloody conquest and enslavement--a fact that unlike greed cannot so easily be admitted within the standard myth, but which is evoked only indirectly through the portrayal of innocent savages destined to be conquered."[134] Again, this aspect of Columbus' voyage is obscured in the romantic depiction of the navigator.

---

[130] Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, 870.

[131] Bigelow, "Two Myths," 29.

---

[132] John Bellamy Foster, "Introduction," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July- August, 1992), 4.

[133] Bush, "Columbus Day 1989: A Proclamation by the President of the United States," in John Yewell, Chris Dodge and Jan De Sirey, eds., Confronting Columbus (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Inc., 1992), 200-201.

Bigelow also found problematic representations such as encounter/exchange which imply equality existed and in so doing, obscure imperialism, extermination and enslavement. Examples of this equalizing included the Fall/Winter 1992 issue of Newsweek entitled "When Worlds Collide" and the Smithsonian's Seeds of Change text and exhibit.[135] The Newsweek issue counselled that there were no "heroes and villains" but rather that the germ of a "Columbian exchange" which gave "us" gold, potatoes and corn whereas "they" received horses, sugar and "regrettably germs."[136] The magazine called for "fairness" and "balance" in presentation and this invariably meant undermining the horror of unequal power and the brutality visited upon indigenous peoples who did not consent to "exchanges" and especially those who resisted invasion. The indigenous agents of resistance such as the Arawaks have been described as "ferocious peoples" or as "wild" and "lazy." Indigenous peoples such as on Nicaragua's Pacific Coast, the Arawaks of San Salvador (Bahamas) and the Tainos of Hispaniola were hunted down with dogs, tortured and burned at the stake; others were enslaved. Moreover, the historian Basil Davidson has described Columbus as "the father of the slave trade" because he initiated the first shipments of indigenous peoples in the New World to Spain.[137] Jalil Sued-Badillo, in a critically documented essay, called Columbus "the father of modern colonialism" because he gave birth to "the expropriation of the natural resources for the benefit of capital accumulation in the metropolitan center; despotic governments run by foreigners," the massive native depopulation, institutionalized slavery, and the establishment of European hegemony in a new order of modern capitalism.[138]

---

[134] Foster, "Introduction," 4.

[135] Bigelow, "Two Myths," 36-37.

[136] Bigelow, "Two Myths," 37.

In the representations constructed upon the encounter myth, the significant difference in military technology was sometimes romanticized. In one account, the extermination of Aztecs was obscured by the language. In "The Demise of the Fifth Sun," Jane MacLaren and Yoko Sugiura claimed that "[T]he terrible destruction wrought by the Spaniards, the roar of guns and cannons, and the rumble of galloping horses may well have caused the Aztec earth to shake."[139] The Aztec's earth did not shake; they were massacred. In this liberal imaginative account, brutality is obscured by a mis-placed poetic language. The difficulty which results is that if massacres are characterized by the roars, rumbles and shakes, then how does one characterize the fact of resistance to brutality, whether the indigenous uprisings, slave revolts, the African-indigenous alliances, and later the Underground Railroad?

---

[137] Davidson, "Columbus: the Bones and Blood of Racism," 18.

[138] Sued-Badillo, "Christopher Columbus and the Enslavement of Amerindians in the Caribbean," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 71-102.

[139] MacLaren and Sugiura, "The Demise of the Fifth Sun" in Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis, Seeds of Change (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 41.

The MacLaren and Sugiura analysis also gave too much emphasis to the military. This precisely is one of the criticisms made of Bigelow and Hans Koning by Shaffer. According to Schaffer, in addition to military power, the defeat of civilizations such as the Aztecs and Incas was possible because of the successive waves of European diseases which accompanied military conquest. Shaffer argued that the minimization of the role of disease in depopulation was problematic because it unintentionally played into notions of European superiority. The primary focus on consciously imported systems of domination and the destruction of indigenous cultures and populations reinforced the belief that there was something culturally and biologically superior about Europeans which allowed so few to conquer so many. Thus, the refusal to recognize the role of diseases left no credible explanation for the ability of the few Spanish, especially over such a large territory, and in the face of great civilizations such as the Aztecs and Incas, to successfully conquer.[140] The incorporation of the biological and ecological dynamics allowed greater sense to be made of the submission of some

---

[140] Alfred Crosby, The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1972); and Crosby, Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe 900-1900 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Aztecs. Once the diseases had overcome the Aztecs, some of the latter interpreted this invisible, non-military power (succumbing to disease) as supernatural; the Spaniards must have been sent by the gods. Some analysts have interpreted this Aztec equation of Spanish disease with power and the supernatural, as an indication of the "primitive" nature of indigenous peoples.[141] However, given the cosmological framework from which many Aztecs viewed the world, the equation was quite rational and made some sense. What kind of power is it that can devastate the powerful Aztecs without even seeing or touching the latter? In any event, the submission or surrender of Aztecs was not universal and this is evident in the fact that once some Aztecs had recovered their health, they continued their resistance to conquest. Most reasonable analyses suggest that were it not for disease, the Aztecs would have defeated the *conquistadores* quite handily.[142]

In other representations centred in the "myth" of encounter as Bigelow elaborated it, the injustices and brutality of say the encomienda system -- a form of indentured servitude -- is "balanced" by the mention of Aztec human sacrifices or the taking of slaves by some indigenous groups. This balancing ignored the structural and unequal dynamics of the imposition of European colonialism, capitalism and Christianity. As Bigelow claimed, the relationship is made symmetrical: "we" were bad but so were "they." This equalizing is fictitious. The cue can be taken from Adam Smith's claim that the conquest brought upon the various colonial peoples a "dreadful misfortune." It resulted in the structuring of economic domination and racial hierarchies. Further, the socio-economic and cultural practices of many indigenous and African communities were unsettled and displaced. Nevertheless, there were numerous and sustained acts of agency and resistance and the intent of the following chapter is to cast light on these acts without obscuring the overwhelming reality of structural and longstanding inequalities.

---

[141] William McNeill, Plaques and People (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 2.

[142] Shaffer, "Exchange\Encounter Theory and Myths of America," 41.

As I pointed out earlier, I intend to use the concept of "encounter." Schaffer was right to argue that it is not adequate exclusively to focus upon consciously imported systems of domination. Throughout this chapter and this study, more generally, I have pointed out the unconscious and unintended dynamics of social-psychological and material relations. Further, the idea of "exchange" can foster a pro-capitalist mentality; however, this occurs only with reductionist analyses which do not attempt to represent the fundamentally asymmetrical relations. To not focus on exchange presents another problem which was not mentioned by either Bigelow or Schaffer. Prior to conquest and colonization, indigenous groups and Africans of the diaspora were, in their various regions, already engaged in exchange. In fact, there are anthropological and historical records which indicate that among the Chorotega of

Nicaragua, for example, women were responsible for the economy and controlled the market place where they exchanged produce, pottery and handicrafts, spun cotton and other goods with indigenous groups in what is today Costa Rica.[143] To make this observation is not to mythologize capitalism. Nor is it necessarily an equalization to point out the "facts" of the various indigenous practices such as the possession and selling of slaves by the Chorotega (recalling that women were buyers and sellers) or that the Aztecs engaged in human scarifices. These observations, in themselves, are not so much the problem as "how" they are interpreted: to absolve Europeans of guilt for colonial savagery, to put the former colonial (object) in her place as Fanon lamented or to fairly represent cultural practices?

In sum, the Bigelow and Schaffer articles, between leftists committed to rational change and exchange, are useful for focusing attention on the problems of conceptualization, especially as it concerns conquest and colonization. The need for self and historical consciousness, for the judicious representation of diverse perspectives and for the rational assigment of moral accountability for brutality, are on-going concerns. In the next chapter, I draw upon this political, historical, psychological and moral enquiry in order to explore and articulate the complexity of various encounters and exchange relationships not only between Europeans and Nicaragua's indigenous groups and ethnic population, but also among Nicaragua's indigenous groups in the colonial and postcolonial periods, and between diverse indigenous groups and the postcolonial Nicaraguan nation-state. This kind of analysis is useful for disrupting the either/or dualisms left over from Christian-moral interpretations of the world, and which permeate much intellectual thinking in Western societies. It prevents simple answers to complex political and moral questions of identity, nationality, cultural interpretations and justice in the postcolonial period.

---

[143] See for e.g. Lisa Newson, Indian Survival in Colonial Nicaragua (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987); and Helms, Asang: Adaptations to Culture Contact in a Miskito Community (Gainsville: University of Florida Press, 1971).

I will be no man's tributary. I am greater than any prince upon the earth. Your emperor may be a great prince: I do not doubt it, seeing that he has sent his subjects so far across the waters; and I am willing to hold him as my brother. As for the Pope of whom you speak, he must be mad to talk of giving away countries which do not belong to him. As for my faith, I will not change it. Your own god, as you tell me, was put to death by the very men he created. But my God still looks down upon his children.

Inca Emperor Atahualpa
Hymans and Ordish, *The Last of the Incas* (1963).

Chapter VII

Trabil Nani: Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast from Conquest to *Klauna iwanka*[1]

> ...the Indian peoples have an inalienable right to all of the lands, waters and resources which is to be known as the autonomous territory of Tapti Tasba...[which] encompasses the traditional Indian territory of the Miskito, Sumo and Rama Nations, including those areas which are now populated by Creole, Carib (Garífono) and Ladino [Mestizo] communities.
>
> Brooklyn Rivera,
> Geneva, August 1987.

> Like the Miskitos, we once lent our land to others without much choice in the matter, and the effort to have that loan repaid makes us brothers. But it doesn't mean we want the same things. Let me put it like this, you can't grow plantains and bananas in the same field.
>
> Sumu Leader Ronas Dolores
> Sukawala, *Envío* (March 1986).[2]

VII.1. Introduction

Throughout this thesis, the relevance of history for human consciousness, for resistance and revolution generally, and for Nicaragua specifically, has been articulated. In this chapter, the long view of history will provide the material for understanding the

---

[1] **The Miskito concept** *trabil nani* means "many troubles." It is borrowed from Armand Mattelart's "Trabil Nani: Historical Background" in Matterlart, ed., Communicating in Popular Nicaragua (Boulder and Bagnolet, France: International General, 1986), 120.

[2] **Sukawala is the acronym for** *Sumu kalpapakna Wahaini Lani*, the major Sumu organization on the Atlantic Coast; Carlos Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity: Capitalist Modernization and Revolutionary Change on the Atlantic Coast (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), 142.

Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, its peoples and its contemporary forms of socioeconomic existence. I examine how sometimes profound differences in history, ethnicity, languages, cultures and religious experiences produced divergent responses to a number of major events of Nicaraguan history, including the movement from colonization to statehood, Sandino's nationalist struggles and the Revolution. Further, the responses to Revolution were not uniform in terms of strategies although they certainly appeared unanimous in intentions. As I discussed in Chapter V, some groups resorted to arms and others engaged in dialogues; both wanted *klauna iwanka* or autonomy. I maintain the view that the Revolution opened the space in which genuine dialogue on indigenous autonomy could occur. However, what has been shown thus far is that counterrevolutions to disrupt, and to undermine, liberatory struggles and transformation tend to occur, to be cultivated and to flourish, in the absence of historical consciousness, ignorance of historical experiences and as a consequence of a calculated obscuration of socioeconomic relations centred in structural inequities, exploitation, persecution and oppression. Thus it is not only the case that these material and ideological contexts require articulation; what is also important is *how* that articulation occurs. There was a relevant political-historical context which greatly informed the responses to the Revolution and *Contra*/revolution and this was not fully captured either in the early *Sandinista* encounters with the Atlantic Coast peoples or the Reagan Administration discourse which exclusively highlighted the Miskitos. Consequently in this chapter it will be important to shift the focus in a way which captures the complexity and diversity of the experiences of peoples on the Atlantic Coast and how these informed their conscious choices toward *klauna iwanka* throughout their political history.

In addition to the introduction to the subject matter of this chapter, there are three interrelated themes which this chapter will clarify. First, it provides an ethnohistorical profile of each indigenous and ethnic group on the Atlantic Coast. Here I simply want to show how they are of a variety of backgrounds, much of which is invisible in the literature on Revolution and counterrevolution in Nicaragua. Second, it examines the fact that the *costeños*, the peoples of the Atlantic Coast, have led a separate existence from the Pacific Coast and this existence was not exclusively one of inferiority or subordination to colonial and imperialist powers as the *Sandinistas'* 1969 Historic Program and early 1980s revolutionary rhetoric suggested. In fact, I show in some detail that in the 1800s the *costeños* had a sophisticated form of self-government which was clearly shaped by European influences but in which the indigenous groups exercised considerable agency. Moreover, the laws of that government, enforced by the *costeños*, were more progressive than those on the Pacific Coast.

The last theme focuses on the political history of *costeno* resistance. I discuss the fact that separately and collectively the *costeños* have resisted integration into the Nicaraguan nation-state from the 1820s. In Chapter V, it was shown how this resistance continued into the 1980s. In effect, the resistance to the *Sandinistas* was not exclusively shaped by external factors, the *Sandinistas'* Marxist ideology or the fact of revolution on the Pacific Coast as the Reagan Administration and other neoconservatives within the United States argued. Rather, resistance was shaped by the ethnohistorical and cultural experiences and by the political economy of the Atlantic Coast itself. These experiences shaped the *costeños'* identity and consciousness and influenced how they responded to various regional and international relations.

VII.2. *Trabil Nani*

In Miskito, *trabil nani* means many troubles and on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua where most of Nicaragua's indigenous and ethnic populations live, the roots of trouble were as multiple as the variety of troubles themselves. At least two and possibly even three or four indigenous groups, cultures and languages have survived many violent, intrusive, unsettling but sometimes productive experiences from the Europeans' expansion into the "New World."[3] These groups survived what a number of Latin American political commentators, including Roxanne Dunbar Ortíz, described as "in the wake" of the 1502 arrival of Columbus and the Spanish *conquistadores* at Cape Gracias a Díos.[4] The metaphor of "wake" is apt for capturing the massive depopulation of the area as a result of genocide, imported European diseases and enslavement. This was especially the case on the Pacific Coast of Nicaragua where one legacy of colonization was the almost complete depopulation of the area.

---

[3] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani" in Matterlart, ed., Communicating in Popular Nicaragua; and Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, Indians of the Americas: Human Rights and Self-Determination (New York: Praeger, 1984).

Historicans and ethnographers estimate that an original population of one million was reduced to thousands between 1522 and the end of colonization in 1821.[5] The depopulation was the result of three factors. First, it was the result of the sheer butchery of the *conquistadores* who killed thousands of Pacific indigenous peoples in their quest to consolidate Spanish dominance. The second factor was the diseases brought to the "New World" by the Europeans: measles and influenza resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of indigenous peoples.[6] The third factor was slavery. Many indigenous peoples were shipped to Peru and the Caribbean to work on plantations and cattle ranches in the 1530s when demand for labour was at a peak. These slaves were either captured by "friendly chiefs" or granted as a form of obligatory tribute to the *conquistadores*.[7] The trafficking in human life resulted in the reduction of Nicaragua's population to about thirty to forty thousand by 1540. As a consequence, a predominantly indigenous ethnic composition was displaced by a primarily Mestizo (Spanish, indigenous, African mixed) population on the Pacific Coast. The varied linguistic groups and cultural formations were displaced by Spanish, Catholicism and capitalism. The situation on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast was different.

---

[4] Ortíz, "The Miskitú people, ethnicity and the Atlantic Coast," Nicaraguan Perspectives 3 (1982); and Ortíz, "Indigenous Rights and Regional Autonomy in Revolutionary Nicaragua," Latin American Perspectives 14, 1 (Winter, 1987), 43-66.

[5] Thomas W. Walker, Nicaragua: Land of Sandino, 2nd edn., revised (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), 10.

[6] See William McNeill, Plagues and People (New York: Doubleday, 1976); Alfred Crosby, Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

In the early 1600s Dutch, British and French smugglers and pirates used the Central American isthmus, especially the Atlantic Coast area, as a base. In the 1630s, the British began trading with the indigenous groups on the Atlantic Coast. In the late 1600s the British renamed the area the Mosquito Coast, *Miskito Taisbaika* or the Mosquitia, thus changing its original Indian name from *Taguzgalpa* which also included parts of Honduras.[8] Between the late 1600s and 1700s, Britain established a protectorate on the Atlantic Coast but the struggle for supremacy over the Central American isthmus continued with Spain, which by now had colonized the Pacific Coast of Nicaragua. During the decade 1631 to 1641, the

---

[7] Walker, Nicaragua, 11.

[8] Newson, Indian Survival, 33-34, 78.

British also established a settlement on the Island of Providencia (now part of Colombia). The British Protestants who settled on the island worked primarily on plantations; however income was supplemented by trade with the mainland.[9] The indigenous groups of the area sometimes cooperated with the British and, in so doing, established a fundamentally different relationship from the one forged between the Spanish colonial power and indigenous groups on the Pacific Coast. Indigenous people who were refugees from the Pacific often fled to the Atlantic Coast from wholesale extermination of communities and/or slave-hunts. The groups on the Atlantic Coast provided the Europeans with medicinal herbs, meat, hammocks, ropes and timber.[10] The indigenous peoples received firearms, metal vessels, tools and rum.

The language(s) of communication between the British and the indigenous peoples and Europeans is not clear; however three developments might be indicative. First, the arrival of Africans in the 1630s as slaves, escaped slaves and from a ship wrecked in the area, and their cohabitation in indigenous villages, especially among Sumus, resulted in relations with Sumus. Many Africans were fully integrated into indigenous communities, whereas others fought with indigenous groups they encountered and took the women as wives.[11] Further, African men cohabited with Sumu women and the "mulatto" offsprings were treated equally. It is possible that the Africans had learned some English, French and Dutch and could act at least as rudimentary interpreters. Similarly, it is possible that the British, French and Dutch smugglers and traders had acquired rudimentary knowledge of some of languages of the African tribes trafficked during the slave trade as well as the indigenous groups of the area. Moreover, anthropologists Mary Helms and Lisa Newton and linguist J. Holm point out that the Miskito language includes words which have Spanish, English and African roots.[12] In effect, through these diverse encounters and exchanges, a language of trade evolved.

---

[9] **Eleanore von Oertzen, Lioba Rossbach and Volker Wünderich, eds., The Nicaraguan Mosquitia in Historical Documents 1844-1927 (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1990), 18.**

[10] **Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 19.**

There is a second possibility for ascertaining the language of communication. The slaves brought from Europe to the Americas were already conversant in Portuguese and Spanish. The Portuguese and Spanish had trafficked in slaves from West Africa during the medieval period. According to Jan Carew, the Portuguese had conquered Ceuta first, followed by Senegal in 1435, Cape Bojador in 1443, Sierra

---

[11] Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 18-21; Newson, Indian Survival, 38-39.

[12] Newson, Indian Survival, 39; J. Holm, "The Creole English of Nicaragua's Miskito Coast: Its Sociolinguistic History and a Comparative Study of Its Lexicon and Syntax." Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1978), 314-323; and Mary Helms, Asang: Adaptations to Culture Contact in a Miskito Community (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1971), 14-19.

Leone three years later, Guinea in 1455 and the Congo in 1481.[13] In fact, Jan Carew pointed out that thousands of slaves were brought from West Africa and sold in the Mediterranean and Eastern slave markets. By the time of Vasco de Gama's voyage around the Cape of Good Hope in 1499, the Portuguese had almost completely conquered West Africa and begun the process of conversion to Catholicism. In fact the chronicler of the Senegalese conquest, Azurara, wrote that the West Africans became "as good and true Christians as if they had directly descended, from those who were first baptised."[14] This conversion did not prevent either the Portuguese or the Spanish from enslaving the Africans and selling them in Europe or transporting them to the Americas. In fact, John Locke, an English trader and renowned political philosopher, brought slaves from West Africa and sold them as servants in England in 1554.[15] It was a Britishman, Sir John Hawkins, who transported the first 500 slaves from West Africa to the "New World" in 1562.[16] Columbus, in fact, was the father of the transAtlantic slave trade, starting the transhipment of indigenous peoples of the Americas to the Mediterranean.[17] The upshot of these conquests and enslavements was that there was a ready supply of enslaved translators capable of conversing in various European and African languages as well as Arabic. Although somewhat of a digression, there are at least two examples of languages worth noting here because they give credence to this second possibility. The first record of an African in Canada was of the freed slave, Matthew DeCosta, who arrived from Portugal on the ship "Jonas" in 1606; he became the translator between the French and MicMac Nations.[18] Not long thereafter slaves were sold in Nouvelle France, the first black man in 1628.[19] A second example was on the Island of Jamaica. Spain had colonized the island but Sir Oliver Cromwell seized it from Spain in 1655 and the slave trade boomed in order to supplement labour on sugar plantations. Records on some plantations were written in Arabic by slave bookkeepers.[20] Despite these demonstrated capacities, the slave trade eventually produced a racial and racist hierarchy, replicated in texts and social relations, which continues today. As Eric Williams put it, "[S]lavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery," the systematic asymmetrical relations of one race over another.[21] Moreover, as I discussed in Chapter VI, in order to justify this inhumanity, it was necessary for the Europeans to construct Africans and indigenous peoples as biologically and morally inferior.[22]

---

[13] Jan Carew, "United We Stand! Joint Struggles of Native Americans and African Americans in the Columbian Era," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 104.

[14] Eric Williams, The Truth About Columbus (New York: Random House, 1939), 109; Carew, "United We Stand!," 105.

[15] Dilip Hiro, Black British, White British: A History of Race Relations in Britain (London: Paladin, 1991), 1.

[16] Hiro, Black British, White British, 1-2.

---

[17] Jalil Sued-Badillo, "Christopher Columbus and the Enslavement of Amerindians in the Caribbean," Monthly Review 44, 3 (July-August, 1992), 71-102.

[18] See film "Field of Endless Days," (National Film Board of Canada, 1973); also Bradford Chambers, ed., Chronicles of Black Protest (Scarborough: New American Library, 1968), 27.

[19] Chambers, ed., Chronicles of Black Protest, 28.

[20] See, Hiro, Black British, White British, 1-25.

The third development was the British practice of giving English names to indigenous people with whom they came in frequent contact during trade.[23] In the seventeenth century, this was primarily Miskitos, offsprings of Sumus and Africans. In this respect, then, it is not coincidental that over time the British developed an alliance primarily with the Miskitos. Further, as political and economic relations evolved, a form of interaction emerged which might suggest the British sought to shape the Miskitos into a form of political organization analogous to that of the British monarchy. In fact, Britain designated part of the Mosquitia a "Mosquito Kingdom" in 1687. The notion of a Miskito Kingdom introduced a form of leadership generally incompatible with the traditional indigenous councils of elders.[24] However, the concept of the Miskito King was not necessarily incompatible with indigenous chiefdoms.[25] In 1687, Jeremy I was crowned the first Miskito King in Jamaica, another British colony. He, like subsequent kings, was educated in Jamaica and England, and in English. Over time, the English-educated "Mosquito King" saw himself as loyal to the British Crown. By inference, Miskitos were his "subjects."

---

[21] Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (London: André Deutsch, 1964), 7.

[22] Nowhere is this distortion of a people so clearly demonstrated than in David Hume's "Of National Character" (1753), Edward Long's History of Jamaica (1774), Charles Darwin's Origin of Species (1859); Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden" (1899).

[23] Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 19.

This apparent shaping of the Miskitos along the lines of a "foreign" form of political structure has been the subject matter of much controversy. On the one hand, some contemporary commentators see the "kingship" as indicative of the British hegemony over the Atlantic Coast and the complete cultural assimilation of the Miskitos. On the other hand, some commentators have argued that the "kingship" was not fundamentally incompatible with regional cultural practices.[26] It is this latter view which is most compelling because it more accurately reveals a greater element of political and economic agency and cultural adaptability on the part of the indigenous groups. Further, this latter body of research especially makes sense in light of the historical origin of Miskitos: Sumus and West Africans. This origin will be elaborated further in the ethnic profiles but first an examination of the "kingship."

---

[24] Jane Freeland, A Special Place in History: The Atlantic Coast in the Nicaraguan Revolution (London: War on Want and the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, 1988), 10.

[25] Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 19-20.

[26] See, for e.g. Mary Helms, "Of Kings and Contexts: Ethnohistorical Interpretations of Miskito Political Structure and Function," American Ethnologist 13 (1986), 198-241; Philip Dennis and Michael Olien, "Kingship among the Miskito," American Ethnologist 11 (1984), 718-737; Michael D. Olien, "The Miskito Kings and the Line of Succession," Journal of Anthropological Research 39 (1983), 198-241; and Philip Dennis, "The Costeños and the Revolution in Nicaragua," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 23, 3 (1981), 271-296.

In the late 1600s into the 1700s, the Miskitos began to emerge as a visibly distinct ethnic group whose cultural practices and language were reflective of indigenous, African and European influences. They also began to emerge as the dominant ethnic group of the area. Mary Helms identified three distinguishing features of the Miskitos. First, the Miskitos' form of social organization was based upon kinship.[27] Second, the Miskitos lived on a mixed subsistence economy which included agriculture, fishing and hunting. Third, they were organized according to the principle of matrilocality and this might have been the result of both tradition and necessity. That is, it might have been the case that the Africans were traditionally organized along matrilocal lines and/or that the Miskitos' exchanges with the Europeans increasingly meant that the men were absent. During such periods, there were groups of consanguineous women who provided each other mutual support but also who maintained the social and cultural practices of the group. This form of social organization was combined with a chiefdom.

Eleonore von Oertzen, Lioba Rossbach and Volker Wünderich in their findings which resulted from a joint project between the Centre for Research and Documentation of the Atlantic Coast (CIDCA) and the Institute of Sociology at the University of Hannover (then in the Federal Republic of Germany), suggested that the Miskito kingship illustrated the "combination of adaptation to external expectations with the upholding of indigenous traditions."[28] Further, they pointed out that from the founding of the Providence Company, all indigenous "Chiefs" were referred to as "Kings" by the British. This is consistent with my earlier observation about the British practice of giving English names to indigenous trading partners. Chiefs were considered "representatives" of "their people" and were more or less recognized as such by the British monarchy and Jamaican governors. The term "king" eventually was incorporated into the Miskito language. Moreover, the chief-king role began to be passed down within the same family and as the institution evolved, or perhaps was shaped by foreign contact, it functioned more like the European conception of monarchy. The latter was true at least in foreign relations. Miskitos within their communities were still socially organized along matrilocal lines. Thus, Oertzen et al concluded that "the concept of King was not just a British invention, serving merely to justify a puppet state; it contained key elements of traditional chieftaincy, in addition to possible borrowings from West African traditions which have yet to be investigated."[29] Along these lines, for example, it would be useful to examine to what extent Africans who found themselves in the Central American area specifically originated from the Asante or Oye Empires or the Dahomey Kingdom in West and West Central Africa. This at least would suggest a familiarity with the concepts of "King" and "Emperor" and, of course, "Chief." Unfortunately this line of enquiry is beyond the scope of this present work.

---

[27] Mary Helms, "Matrilocality, Social Solidarity, and Culture Contact," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 26 (1970), 197-212.

---

[28] Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 19.

The result of the various exchanges resulted in the Miskitos attaining a privileged position vis-a-vis the other indigenous groups of the area. In the seventeenth century, various ethnographers and geographers reported an agreement between the British and the Miskito King which granted Britain a protectorate role over the area. The earliest written report on such an agreement is the 1720 treaty between "His Majesty Jeremy, King of the Mosquito Indians" and the representatives of the British Crown in residence on the Atlantic Coast.[30] In turn, King Jeremy provided the British "fifty able-bodied men to assist the Jamaican plantation owners in their struggle against runaway slaves."[31] By the eighteenth century when documentations on the area were becoming increasingly prolific, the

---

[29] Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 19; Helms, "Of Kings and Context," 198-241; Dennis and Olien, "Kingships among the Miskitos," 718-737.

[30] Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 20.

[31] Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 20.

Miskitos had become indispensable to the British. They joined forces with British troops to conduct numerous raids against Spanish towns and forts on the Pacific Coast as well as raids against other indigenous groups, including the Sumus and Ramas.[32]

VII.3. Decolonization, Neocolonialism

In the early 1800s, Nicaragua's Pacific Coast obtained its independence gradually.[33] It began with a revolt in New Granada (Colombia) led by Bolívar and Miranda in 1811. On September 15, 1821, the revolt resulted in the establishment of Colombia as a republic which included New Granada, Venezuela, Ecuador, Guatemala (and all of Central America).[34] Spain withdrew from the Central American isthmus in 1821 and that year Britain, which had left the Atlantic Coast as part of the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, returned to the Atlantic Coast and again imposed a protectorate role. Another change in the status of the former Spanish territories occurred on January 5, 1822 after a Mexican intervention led by Emperor Augustín de Iturbide. By November 4, 1822, Mexican power had been established over Guatemala and the Central America territories. The Iturbide Empire was toppled by insurgents led by Santa Anna on April 23, 1823 and the United Provinces of Central America (alternately called the Central American Federation) was formed. The Federation lasted about fifteen years before splitting up. Nicaragua became the first to secede and proclaim a sovereign, independent republic on April 30, 1838; the first Constitution was written in November, 1838.[35] Two years later Britain, still on the Atlantic Coast, declared itself to hold an official protectorate over the area. In the mid-1800s, the governments on the Pacific, either the Liberal party based primarily in the city of Leon or the Conservative party in Granada, sought to bring the entire area considered Nicaraguan territory, under the jurisdiction of the nation-state and this was variously contested by Britain and the inhabitants of the area.[36]

---

[32] Helms, "Miskito Slaving and Culture Contact: Ethnicity and Opportunity in an Expanding Population," Journal of Anthropological Research 39, 2 (1983), 179-197.

[33] Thomas W. Walker, Nicaragua: The Land of Sandino, 2nd edn. (Boulder: Westview, 1986), 13.

[34] Harvey K. Meyer, Historical Dictionary of Nicaragua (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1972), 201.

In 1860, the struggle for power over the area led Britain and the Republic of Nicaragua to sign the Treaty of Managua. Britain recognized the sovereignty of the government of Nicaragua over the Atlantic Coast. Further, Britain negotiated for a greatly reduced area to exist as the "Miskito Reserve." The Reserve government was granted the right of self-determination.[37] The area peoples were not a party to discussions nor a signatory to the treaty.

---

[35] Meyer, Historical Dictionary, 202.

[36] Walker, Nicaragua, 12-24.

[37] See "Treaty of Managua (1860)" in Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 315-317.

Nevertheless, the *costeños* remained loyal to Britain. However, this loyalty did not seem to preclude the government of the Mosquito Kingdom, governed primarily by Creoles, in the late 1800s from providing good government for the residents of the area. This will be discussed in the section on "reincorporation" since the Miskito Reserve ended with martial law imposed by the nationalist Liberal government of José Santos Zelaya in 1894.[38] This incorporation was challenged in formal petitions by the Miskito King and Creole representatives to the British Crown as well as to the United States' representative. However, the forceable incorporation remained in effect, at least formally. The area remained distinct from the rest of Nicaragua in terms of ethnic composition, cultures, languages, religion and habits of living.

In the period after incorporation, the Atlantic Coast peoples had various encounters with the peoples of the Pacific Coast but there was no widespread interaction. In terms of culture, religion and language they were profoundly different and for the most part, the *costeños* continued to resist internal integrationist efforts from the Pacific Coast governments. This was certainly true for the revolutionary *Sandinista* government led by Daniel Ortega Saavedra (1979-1990). It is ironic that the pro-indigenous and integrationist stance of the *Sandinistas* was received with greater hostility than the previous Nicaraguan governments which were often authoritarian, indifferent or otherwise oppressive. In the case of the Somozas (1932-1979), who essentially interacted with the area for its economic possibilities, the relations were much better. For the most part the various Somozas did not attempt complete integration; they exploited the area's resources for profit and to the extent that *costeños* were employed by these enterprises, they also supported them. In any event, the *Sandinistas'* encounter with the indigenous and ethnic populations was analagous to the experience of General Cesar Augusto Sandino in the 1920s and 1930s.[39] The indigenous peoples were not overly supportive of Sandino's anti-imperialist nationalist struggles particularly since by this time many of them were working for banana, mahogany and mining companies from the United States and Canada. Some Miskitos and Sumus, however, did collaborate with Sandino, although others saw him in light of investors' descriptors of the guerrilla and his army as "bandits."[40] Many of these enterprises were continued by the Somozas between the 1940s and 1970s and many *costeños* economically benefitted, however slightly. The *Sandinistas* had not factored this in; they only saw the cheap wages and poor working conditions and the undeveloped condition of the Atlantic Coast's infrastructure. Consequently, when the *Sandinistas* attempted what they thought would be a beneficial integration, they were resisted.

---

[38] **See "The Mosquito Convention of 1894" in Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 391-394; as well, critical commentaries of the British consul, Creole leaders and other observers, 395-424.**

---

[39] Freeland, A Special Place, 27-30.

[40] Carlos M. Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 50; Neil Macaulay, The Sandino Affair (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1967).

The indigenous and ethnic populations continue to survive in the shadows of the Nicaraguan Revolution on the Pacific and primarily Spanish-speaking Coast. The events between the founding of the *Sandinistas* in the 1960s and the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship were experienced quite differently by those who lived on the Atlantic Coast. For the most part, there was no large scale Atlantic Coast participation although some indigenous peoples living and schooling on the Pacific Coast were active within the Revolution.[41] In Chapter V, I pointed out that during the early to mid-1980s there was armed resistance to the *Sandinistas* by primarily by Miskitos. I also showed why this opposition was not properly reduced to a counterrevolution. As Charles R. Hale pointed out, the Miskitos in general did not see themselves as being interested in "dividing Nicaragua" nor in "taking power in Managua."[42] Rather, their collective efforts might best be described as a "struggle for indigenous rights," a revolution within the revolution or simply as an "indigenous revolution."

During most of the period of armed hostilities, especially between 1984 and 1987, historic dialogues were occurring in addition to armed struggles. These dialogues between the indigenous and ethnic populations and the *Sandinista* government were for *klauna iwanka* or autonomy.[43] Many of the indigenous peoples involved in armed struggle were not *Contras* interested in undermining the Nicaraguan Revolution as such; they wanted the political space in which they could exercise the positive right of indigenous peoples to *klauna iwanka*. Miskito leader Brooklyn Rivera said in 1982 that his fighters were interested in "justice for Indians, not the military defeat of the *Sandinistas*."[44] However, this armed opposition to the *Sandinistas* was readily appropriated by the Reagan Administration to suggest the indigenous peoples were *struggling against* a monolithic construct identified as "Marxist-Leninist totalitarianism" as opposed to a *struggle for* something, namely the right to *klauna iwanka*. In this proactive conceptualization which I prefer, it is possible to more accurately recognize the fact of human agency. Further, this conceptualization more readily encompasses a sense of distinct ethnic, cultural and linguistic identities, and self-knowledge of divergent historical experiences. In the Reagan Administration's discourse, between 1980 and 1988 especially, the indigenous struggles were collapsed into the more general anti-*Sandinista* (reduced to anti-communist) stance of the *Contras*.

---

[41] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 96-97.

[42] Hale, "Miskitú: Revolution in the Revolution," NACLA Report on the Americas XXV, 3 (December, 1991), 24, also 25-28.

---

[43] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 142-187.

[44] Rivera interview in Costa Rica cited in Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, The Central American Fact Book (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1986), 279.

In 1987, the *Sandinista* government passed in the National Assembly an autonomy law jointly negotiated by the *costeños* and the government. Since then, the peoples of the Atlantic Coast have been living in two autonomous zones.[45] This negotiated settlement occurred almost four years prior to the end of the *Contra* warfare. However, as I have mentioned earlier, this is not the first time the area was given autonomy although this earlier experience has not been fully articulated in most analyses of the 1980s negotiations.[46] Yet, these rich and informative experiences are central to understanding the peoples on their own terms as well as how they have been interpreted throughout their political history by regional commentators. Thus, it is useful to look back to these experiences to see in what way they can enhance contemporary understandings of the *costeños'* politics. With this broad overview in mind, I now move to the second section of this chapter which provides an ethnohistorical profile of each indigenous and ethnic group.

VII.4. Ethnohistory, Identities and the Roots of Conflict

In this section, I extrapolate from the complex experiences of the various indigenous and ethnic populations in order to provide six profiles: of Sumus, Ramas, Miskitos, Creoles, Garífunas and Mestizos. From these profiles, I will shift to an integrated analysis of their shared and divergent experiences. Much of the solid research on the ethnic groups on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua has been conducted by historians, geographers and especially anthropologists. These researchers devised several ways of classifying the various indigenous groups. They drew primarily upon cultural, linguistic and archeological evidence.[47] Drawing upon this combined evidence, the indigenous groups inhabiting what is today Nicaragua were divided according to two major zones: those sharing characteristics common to indigenous groups in South America and those possessing characteristics similar to those indigenous groups found in Mesoamerica.[48] Because of the blending of cultures at the margins of the two dominant areas, C. F. Baudéz suggested it is better to talk about a "zone of Mesoamerican tradition" and a "zone of South American tradition."[49] Greater specificity is difficult because of the absence of, or the as yet unexplored, source materials. The documentation which presently exists is fragmentary and predominantly from the point of view of *conquistadores,* colonial administrators, missionaries, and official chroniclers of the British and Spanish Crowns. Many of these chroniclers never visited the region. Their classifications were derived from the early reports of emigrants to the "New World."[50] Newson pointed out that information was sometimes copied indiscriminately and often contained errors.

---

[45] **"From Separatism to Autonomy--Ten Years on the Atlantic Coast," Envío 8, 93 (April, 1989), 40.**

[46] **An exception is Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity.**

---

[47] Newson, Indian Survival, 23.

[48] P. Kirchhoff, "Mesoamerica," Acta Americana 1 (1943), 92-107; C.F. Baudéz, Central America (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970).

[49] Baudés, Central America, 227n2.

Documentation by Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés in the sixteenth century identified four major language groups: Chorotega, Chondal, Orotina and Nicaragua which he suggested was "the same [language] as they speak in Mexico."[51] Another documentation by López de Gómara identified five language groups: Coribici, Chorotega, Chondal, Orotina and Mejicano.[52] Both Oviedo and Gómara refer to languages spoken in Mexico. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the indigenous groups in the area of present day Mexico often sought their autonomy from the various colonial powers: Spain, Britain and later the United States. When such efforts failed, some groups relocated further into the Central American area, especially in Honduras, Belize and on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. Between 1847 and 1853, for example, the Santa Cruz (Kekchi Maya) along the Mexico-British Honduras (now Belize) border attempted to obtain their autonomy. However, the British and Mexican authorities collaborated to defeat the Santa Cruz. Autonomy denied, some Santa Cruz and Yucatec Mayas from the Yucatan engaged in sugar cane planting in Belize, Honduras and on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast after the industry boomed in 1848. Some became part of San Antonio, the largest Maya community in Belize and San Pedro Colombia, a village some 20 miles west of Punta Gorda, just outside the Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast city of Bluefields.[53] In this way, then, at least one linguistic-cultural group predominantly found in Mexico came to exist on the Atlantic Coast of Central America.

---

[50] Newson, Indian Survival, 24.

[51] Newson, Indian Survival, 26.

[52] Newson, Indian Survival, 26.

Drawing upon numerous documentations, Newson pointed out that there were other languages spoken in the area at the time of the European contacts and after. Evidence suggested that in the Mesoamerican zone, the cultural-linguistic groups included the Chorotega, the Maribio, the Pipíl, the Nahuatl and the Nicarao. In the South American zone, the cultural-linguistic groups included the Sumu, the Rama, the Matagalpa, the Jicaque, the Paya and the Lena.[54] However, there were instances in which some groups could be found "out of zone." This was the case for the Nahuatl traders who could be found in the South American zone and the Uluas, a Sumu cultural-linguistic group, who were sometimes found in the Mesoamerican zone.

The indigenous groups on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, then, were part of the South American cultural-linguistic groups. The area comprised eastern Nicaragua and Honduras. The geographic boundary of this area, demarcating what was known as *Taquzgalpa*, was the Segovia River and possibly even as far south as the San Juan River. The indigenous groups in the area were "unconverted," meaning they were neither conquered by the Spanish nor came into frequent contact with Catholic missionaries. Early documentations of indigenous groups in this area were quite confusing. One report by Friar José Ximenez in 1748 identified at least twenty-eight "Indian nations" including "Lencas, Tahuas, Alhuatuynas, Xicaquez, Mexicanos, Limucas, Aquagualcas, Yguyales, Cuges, Bocayes, Tomayes, Bucataguacas, Quicamas, Panamacas, Yziles, Guayaes, Mostucas, Barucas, Apazinas, Nanaycas and many others."[55] However, Newson cautioned that names like "Xicaque," "Caribe" and "Chontal" were sometimes used generically to connote a number of these indigenous groups and thus Ximenez' listing might simply include them individually.[56] In any event, it is only since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that more reliable and consistent documentations have emerged (and even then these simply may be the result of repetition). Moreover, in these latter periods, many reports focussed on the Miskitos, especially their relations with the British and the Spanish hostility toward them. Consequently, much more is known about their way of life and activities. The subsequent profiles reflect this general disparity in information for the various groups.

---

[53] William Luz, Historical Dictionary of the Caribbean (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1975), 60, 75.

[54] Newson, Indian Survival, 26, 33.

---

[55] Ximenez cited in Newson, Indian Survival, 34.

[56] Newson, Indian Survival, 33-34.

VII.5. Sumu Experiences

The presence of Sumus on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast predates contact with Europeans. The Sumus were one of six major indigenous groups reported to be living in the area at the time of contact. However, archeological evidence pinpointed their arrival to the area much earlier. The historical record identified seven major sub-groups of Sumus: the Pawyers, Panamahkas, Twahkas, Mussues, Woolvas, Ramas and Cuckeras, with the best known group being the Twahka.[57] Another Sumu sub-group which extended into Honduras and El Salvador was the Ulua (Wulwa, Olua or Ohlwa) who eventually moved inland from their traditional habitat along the rivers because of Miskito attacks.[58]

---

[57] Long, History of Jamaica, vol. 1, 320. These groups were sometimes collectively called "Caribs" and archeological evidence does not provide much clarification. See, R.W. Magnus, "The Prehistoric and Modern Subsistence Patterns of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua: A Comparison" in B.L. Stark and B. Voorhies, eds. Prehistoric Coastal Adaptations: The Economy and Ecology of Maritime Middle America (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 61-80.

[58] H.A. Wickham, "Notes on the Soumoo or Woolwa Indians of Blewfields River, Mosquito Territory," Journal of the Anthropological Institute 24 (1895), 198-208 and Wickham, "Notes on a Journey Among the Woolwa and Miskito Indians," Proceedings of the Royal Geographic Society 13 (1869), 160; and D.G. Brinton, "The Matagalpan Linguistic Stock of Central America," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 34 (1895), 403-15, and Brinton, The American Race (New York:

Today, there are at least three distinguishable linguistic groups of Sumus. They live in villages extending along the rivers and tributaries of the Rio de Matagalpa to the Patuca River in Honduras.[59] The approximately 2,000 *Panamahka Sumus* are the largest linguistic group and they live in the river basin of Bambana, Tungki, Pis Pis, Uly and Kwabul rivers. The largest village is Musawas with a population of about 620 *Panamahka Sumus*.[60] The *Ulwa Sumus* are the second largest linguistic group with about 1,600 in number. They are to be found primarily along the Prinzapolka River and the Rio Grande de Matagalpa. Finally, there are about 1,000 *Twahka Sumus* settled near the banks of the Bambana and Bocay Rivers. The largest village is Wasakin, located in the central part of the Department of Zelaya.

Historically, the Sumus were dominated by the Miskitos. During the eighteenth century Sumu men were captured and their villages ransacked by Miskitos who then sold them into British slavery.[61] The women were taken as brides or given to British settlers as wives and/or domestics. These relationships resulted in the depletion of Sumus but also the further intermixing of Miskitos. The Sumu, like the Rama and other inland tribes were considered by the Miskitos as

---

N.D.C. Hodges, 1891), 163.

[59] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 4.

[60] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 4.

[61] "The Atlantic Coast--Peace Has Taken Hold," Envío 7, 83 (June 1988), 39; Helm, Asang; and Newson, Indian Survival.

alboawinneys which literally means "slave meat."[62] Men were exported to the Caribbean Islands especially Jamaica, or wherever slaves were needed. These attacks depleted the number of Sumus generally. Members of the groups survived primarily because they isolated themselves from constant wars and the immigration of Europeans.

With the decline of British power and the ascendancy of United States influence in the 1800s, the Miskitos continued to be construed as "the indigenous" peoples of Nicaragua. In the late 1800s and early 1900s other ethnic groups, including the Creoles, gained social ascendancy especially because of the usefulness of English in trades with the United States and Canada. In the mid-1900s through the Somoza dictatorship, the Sumu were overshadowed by a Mestizo ascendancy as economic exploitation by the central governments increased and Spanish became the language for communicating with the Pacific Coast.[63] In Chapter Three I showed that in the 1980s the Sumus were invisible in the discourse of Reagan policymakers. Although the *Sandinistas* made headway with speaking to the needs of all indigenous peoples of Nicaragua, including seeking to record and preserve the Sumu language, few would dispute the hegemony of the

---

[62] Newson, Indian Survival, 205. In Miskito, *alba*=slave and *wina*=meat; see A. de Alcedo, Diccionario geografico-histórico de las Indias Occidentales o America, 5 vols (Madrid: Manuel Gonzaléz, 1786-89), vol. 3, 321.

[63] Freeland, A Special Place, 12-51; Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 3-59.

Miskitos during the autonomy process.[64]

VII.6. Rama Experiences

The Ramas lived to the south of the Sumus and they were at one time numerous on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. Culturally and linguistically, they are considered to be a sub-group of the Votos, a member of the South-American Chibchan family.[65] Early regional references do not mention them specifically but the existence of the Votos does appear in some references to the area. The Votos inhabited the areas along the San Juan River but were displaced by the Miskito and buccaneer raids as well as by the Spaniards who used the river as one of their transportation routes.[66] During the colonial period they, like the Sumus, were dominated by the British and the Miskitos primarily in the area around Punta Gorda Monkey Point, south of the city of Bluefields. Like the Sumus, they were also captured by the Miskitos and sold into British slavery or forced to pay tribute to the Miskito King.

It was not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that Ramas began appearing as a distinct group in the ethnic documentations of the area.[67] One reference suggests that Votos lived along with Englishmen and "Zambos" in Punta Gorda. The "Zambos" could be either "Miskitos" of darker complexion or Africans who are later identified as "blacks." It is believed that these Votos were Ramas because only thirty years later both the historians Edward Long and Stephen Kemble refer specifically to Ramas living in that area.[68] Other historical references suggest that the "Caribes de Melchora" or simply Melchora were also Ramas and they lived north of the San Juan River, west of the Santa River, along the eastern shores of Lake Granada and between Fort Carlos and Acoyapa.[69]

---

[64] Freeland, A Special Place, 65-90.

[65] Newson, Indian Survival, 37.

[66] J. A. Mason, "The Native Languages of Middle America," in The Maya and Their Neighbors (New York: D. Appleton Century, 1940), 76, 86; 52-87.

They were predominantly fishermen, tortoise-shell collectors and excellent boat builders. The Ramas were renowned for their dories and their canoes were considered more seaworthy than those built by the other indigenous groups.[70] This reputation as boatmen is commemorated in the names given to Rama River and Rama Cay, near Bluefields. Tribal legends recorded by missionaries suggest that the Rama Chief Hannibal was given the Cay by the "Zambo-Mosquito king" after Hannibal assisted the king in a campaign against the Terebas of

---

[67] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 2.

[68] Newson, Indian Survival, 37; Long, History of Jamaica, vol. 1, 320-322.

[69] Newson, Indian Survival, 38; P.F. Stout, Nicaragua: Past, Present and Future (Philadelphia, 1859), 113.

[70] Meyer, Historical Dictionary, 360.

Costa Rica.[71] According to the legend, Hannibal then retired to Rama Cay with his three wives and began "propagating." Some Ramas worked for European settlers in the towns of Bluefields and Pearl Lagoon in the mid-1800s. Many others were wiped out by enslavement, extermination, European diseases and the constant wars. Ramas often came up short because the buccaneers and the Miskitos were armed. By 1820, there were fewer than 500 Ramas. In the postcolonial periods their numbers have not increased dramatically and today it is estimated that there are about 800.[72]

Prior to the Nicaraguan Revolution and *Contra*/revolution, the largest enclave of Rama was in Ciudad Rama, located at the confluence of three rivers: the Míco, Siquía and Rama. Today it is estimated that there are only about 50 Ramas who speak the original tongue and efforts have been underway to record it; most Ramas speak Creole English.

VII.7. Miskito Experiences

The most renowned ethnic group is the Miskitû, Missquito or more commonly, the Miskitos. They inhabit the areas along the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua and Honduras, mostly along the Rio Coco Valley, and up along the eastern jungle rivers such as the Prinzapolka, the

---

[71] Newson, Indian Survival, 38.

[72] Meyer, Historical Dictionary, 360.

Grandes and the Escondido.[73] The area is known as the Mosquito Coast and the spelling is a legacy of the British confusion and corruption of the name, consistent with the insects which were also in abundance: the mosquitos. The Mosquito Coast stretched from Cape Gracias a Díos (a testament to Columbus) to Cape Honduras near the Spanish settlement of Trujillo.[74]

Miskitos are the most numerous ethnic group in Belize, Honduras and Nicaragua. The first documented reference to their existence is in the writing of the buccaneer Exequemelin in 1672.[75] In Chapter V, I pointed out that anthropological, archeological and even biological evidence suggest "the Mosquito are a purely historical group whose origin is the intermixing of Sumu Indians and blacks [Africans] who were shipwrecked on the Mosquito Cays in 1641."[76] In light of this, the Miskitos have more in common with the Nicaraguan Creoles or Mestizos who are also "mixed," than they do with the Sumus as such. They are analogous to the "Black Indians" (the Spanish referred to them as *maroons*) of the United States and perhaps, to a lesser extent, the Metis of Canada.[77]

---

[73] Meyer, Historical Dictionary, 273-274.

[74] Cyril Hamshere, The British in the Caribbean (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), 169 and 45, 174-177.

[75] Newson, Indian Survival, 38; Helms, Asang, 16-19; E. Conzemius, Ethnographical Survey of the Miskito and Sumu Indians of Honduras and Nicaragua (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 106), 17; also Conzemius, "Notes on the Miskito and Sumu Languages of Eastern Nicaragua and Honduras," International Journal of American Linguistics 5 (1929), 57-115.

[76] Newson, Indian Survival, 38; also G.A. Matson and J. Swanson, "Distribution of Hereditary Blood Antigens Among Indians in Middle America: V, in Nicaragua" American Journal of Physical Anthropology 21 (1963), 545-557.

In 1711, the Catholic Bishop of Managua described Miskito origins as follows:

> In 1641 a ship laden with Negroes [African slaves] was ship wrecked on the Atlantic Coast, and in the port between the San Juan River, in the Province of Nicaragua, and the city of Trujillo, in the Province of Honduras...one-third of the Negroes were gathered together, and the rest took refuge and settled in the foothills of those mountains occupied by Carib Indians [Sumu] who, suspicious and fearful of new arrivals, made war on them, and for a few years it was very bitter, and in time the Negroes defeated the Caribs, and these retired into the mountains toward the lands of Segovia and Chontales...With women of the conquered, the conquerors multiplied and because these first strangers are already dead, they call their descendents Zambos because they are the sons of Negroes and Indian women.[78]

Linda Newson argued in Indian Survival in Colonial Nicaragua, that although today the group is known as the "Miskito Indians" -- a classification used mostly by social scientists -- the "mixed" nature of the Zambo-Mosquito makes it difficult to classify them as an

---

[77] William Loren Katz, Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage (New York: Atheneum, 1986). Katz defined the "Black Indians as people who have a dual ancestry or black people who have lived for some time with Native Americans." He goes on to note that "[W]hen slaves escaped to the woods and joined or began remote communities, they are called by the Spanish term *maroons*." Black Indians, 6-7.

[78] Bishop of Managua, cited in Newson, Indian Survival, 38-39. Newson points out that it was not uncommon for some ethnographers to refer to all Indians in the Atlantic Coast area as "Carib Indians"; see 33, 36-39.

"Indian" group in the same sense as one might classify the Sumus and Ramas. Further, she suggested that in this early period the Miskitos' sustained contact with the British and other Europeans transformed their traditional culture to a significant extent, making it improbable that they be classified as "Indians." Consequently, Newson preferred the anthropologically derived ethnic concept of Zambo-Mosquito. In fact, in her index references to the Miskito are under "Zambo-Mosquito."

Anthropologically the classification of Zambo-Mosquito might be accurate. However, what Newson does not explore is the political nature and consequences of the identity construct. As will be pointed out later in this chapter, the Miskitos pressed the *Sandinista* government for lands which they claimed traditionally comprised "Miskito, Sumu and Rama nations."[79] Some Miskito leaders also suggested that Creoles "did not belong" on the Atlantic Coast and that Garífunas were "Hondurans." Ironically, were it not for the prior existence of Africans on the Atlantic Coast, there would be no Miskito "Indians." As such, there could not be any pre-European contact "Miskito nations." Given the Miskitos' origins, their claims and gains based on a largely mythical construct of "Indian roots" and identity became that much more interesting.

Historically, the Miskitos have dominated the other indigenous groups. I discussed earlier that they became the principal ally of the British during colonial rule in the area from British Honduras (Belize) to Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. Later in the colonial period, the Miskitos were armed by the British, who also influenced the restructuring of the Miskito community's form of representation with non-Miskito groups. I pointed out in the introduction that the Miskito chieftancy evolved along the lines of the British monarchy. As well, the kings were influenced by English education and cultural practices. For example, from 1805 to 1825, the British sent Robert Charles to Jamaica for schooling and upon returning to Nicaragua in 1825, he was crowned "King of the Miskito Indians."[80]

---

[79] Freeland, A Special Place, 52-85.

This tradition of crowning Miskito Kings educated in Jamaica or England continued for some 200 years despite the fact that Miskitos maintained much of their customary practices.[81] Further, as noted above, on behalf of the British, the Miskitos would raid the villages of Sumus and Ramas and sell the men into British slavery. The women would be taken as brides.[82] The British-armed Miskitos also forced Sumus and Ramas to pay tribute to the Miskito King. The alliance with the British was advantageous for both the Miskitos and the British. Under the British, the Miskitos were the dominant ethnic group and with Miskito assistance, the British could protect their possessions from the Spanish with little extra financial burden.

---

[80] Lux, Historical Dictionary, 65.

[81] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 123.

[82] Envío (June, 1988), 39.

According to the British historian Edward Long:

> [Miskitos]...have always been, and still are, in the place of a standing army; which, without receiving any pay, or being in any shape burthensome to Great Britain, maintains the English in firm and secure possession [of Britain's colonies], protects their trade, and forms an inpenetrable barrier against the Spanish, whom they keep in constant awe.[83]

Moreover, when the British needed forces to put down various rebellions in its Caribbean colonies, it would call upon the Miskitos. For example, I pointed out in the introduction that in 1720 the Miskitos strengthened the British forces in their repression of runaway slaves on the island of Jamaica.[84]

This pact between the British and the Miskitos did not go unnoticed by the Spanish, the principal colonial rival in Central America. Contrary to Long's favourable assessment of the role of the Miskitos, a contemporary of Long's described the Miskitos to the King of Spain as thieves for the British. Fray Benito Garret y Arlovi, Catholic Bishop of the Nicaraguan area of León, recommended to the King of Spain that he dispatch a fleet of battleships to destroy the alliance and pave the way for Spanish dominion over the area. In addition to the objectives of saving souls and securing the land and water ways for profit, Fray Benito recommended another objective:

---

[83] Long, The History of Jamaica, Vol. 3, 320; also cited in Troy Floyd, The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for the Mosquitia (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), 67; Bourgois, "Nicaragua's Ethnic Minorities," 29.

[84] Mary Helms, "Miskito Slaving in the 17th and 18th Centuries: Culture, Contact and Ethnicity in an Expanding Population," Paper presented at the 44th International Congress of Americanists, Manchester, September 1982, cited in Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 4-5, 18, 54n3.

> ...The second is that, once exterminated the Miskitos, the thousand men [of the Spanish expedition] upon returning can clear the three torrents in the San Juan River....once [the expedition has] destroyed the Miskitos, infamous thieves for the English, and cleared those three passes, Your Majesty's royal coffers shall obtain most singular monies, because trade will return to life.[85]

The Spanish never did secure dominion over the Atlantic Coast. Later, a number of Miskitos, and the Sumus and Ramas captured by the British or hunted and sold into slavery by the Miskitos, buttressed the British labour force. This was particularly the case in sugar cane production in islands like Jamaica, especially in the period between 1685 and 1740 when privateering was prohibited. This period also coincided with the decline of white indentured slaves throughout the West Indies. By the early to mid-1800s, the British influence began to decline and simultaneously the United States emerged as the dominant power in the region. Although Britain's economic influence was declining, it had maneuvered itself into a legal protectorate of the Mosquito Coast. By the late 1890s and early 1900s, the Miskitos' socially privileged position eroded with Zelaya's forced incorporation and this erosion in social status continued through the early 1920s and 1930s and into the Somoza dictatorship.

---

[85] Fray Benito Garret y Arlovi, "Carta al Rey sobre exterminio de los Misquitos" (Granada, November 30, 1711) in Manuel M. de Peralta, Costa Rica y Costa de Mosquitos (Paris, np, 1898), 41-42; Vilas, State Class & Ethnicity, 16.

In the late 1970s, in addition to those who lived on the Coast, there were some 540 Miskito families who lived in the capital city of Managua before the *Contra* war and another 3,000 who relocated there between 1981 and 1983. There were also some Miskito families who did not relocate to Nicaragua from Costa Rican refugee camps after the *Contra*/revolution.[86] Although there is a sizable population of Miskitos in Honduras, as well as some who migrate between Nicaragua and Honduras, the majority of Miskitos live on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. Before the *Contra*/revolution, the Miskitos were engaged in fishing and small-scale farming. They also engaged in seasonal work with various foreign industries including in mining, banana plantations, and fishing.

VII.8. Creoles or Criollos Experiences

Creoles or Criollos, as understood on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, are predominantly of an African or partial African slave heritage and European ancestry. Slaves were brought into the area between the late 1500s and the early 1600s. Generally today's Creoles are the descendants of enslaved Africans, runaway slaves from the Caribbean and/or freed slaves from ship wrecks or those who relocated to the area, especially from Jamaica. It is believed that the presence of Africans on the Atlantic Coast began about the sixteenth century with the arrival of the first buccaneer ships in Bluefields, Pearl Lagoon and Cape Gracias a Díos.[87] In Nicaragua, the traffic in humans were controlled by Spain on the Pacific Coast and Britain on the Atlantic Coast. There was some racial admixture with Amerindians and, as well documented, European slave traders often had sex with African slavewomen, giving rise to another "mixed race."[88] In Nicaragua the offspring are called Creoles, which is analagous to the "Mandingo" or "mulattoe" in North America. Like the majority of slaves involved in the European trade, they were originally from West Africa and West Central Africa, hence from the Asante Empire, the Fon peoples of the Dahomey Kingdom, the Ibos of Iboland, the Yorubas of Yorubaland and the Oye Empire.[89] The arrival of the first slaves, then, predated the origin of Miskitos.

---

[86] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 4-5.

After 1633 the influx of Africans increased with the creation of the Providence Island Company. African slaves were brought onto the

---

[87] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 5. **The word buccaneers is derived from** *boucan*, connoting a process of curing strips of meat with smoke by slowing turning it over a fire pit; precursor to smoked meat. *Bouconiers* or Buccaneers were men who hunted and sold animal hides and smoked meat to passing ships. In the mid-1600s when Britain and Spain were at war, the British hired buccaneers as mercenaries to attack the Spanish; the buccaneers were paid by having full reign to plunder; Lux, Historical Dictionary, 14.

[88] Newson, Indian Survival, 39-41.

[89] Elizabeth M. Halcrow, Canes and Chains: A Study of Sugar and Slavery (London: Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd., 1982), 37-64.

Coast to work on the company's plantations. After the signing of the Treaty of Versailles with Spain in 1787, Britain left the region but the British subjects who remained did not free their slaves, although there were some freed and escaped slaves who also inhabited the area. Many British settlers took their slaves to Belize to engage in the mahogany trade which was booming. It was in Belize that the British revived the Miskito Kingship after Spain left the isthmus.[90] In Belize, the descendents of the African slaves constitute the nucleus of contemporary Belizean society. In the 1800s there was an influx of Belizean and Jamaican Creoles and by the late 1800s they, along with Nicaraguan Creoles, were running the administration of the Miskito Reserve. In 1834, slavery was abolished and Creole communities grew as freed and emancipated Africans relocated from the Caribbean. They engaged in woodcutting, fishing, farming and as traders. For the most part, Africans were referred to as "Negroes" and did not enjoy the same ethnic status as Creoles. Freeland pointed out that at least one Miskito governor owned African slaves and in his community Africans were treated as poorly as Sumus.[91] This was not true for Africans in Creole-dominated area; many easily assimilated.

Creole affluence continued until Zelaya's reincorporation in 1894 whereafter the Spanish-speaking Mestizos assumed many of the administrative posts formerly held by Creoles. This continued through the Somoza dictatorship although the ability to speak English privileged the Creoles in relations with foreign investors from the United States and Canada. At the time of the Revolution, Creoles worked for foreign companies, as administrators, teachers, nurses and in fisheries.[92]

---

[90] Freeland, A Special Place, 20.

[91] Freeland, A Special Place, 20.

VII.9. Experiences of Garífunas/Black Caribs

The Garífunas are the descendants of the original peoples of the Caribbean, the Red and Black *Carabeece* or Caribs. Inspired by the French Revolution, the Caribs and runaway slaves frequently rebelled against the British in the Leeward Islands in the late 1700s. They were forcibly deported by the British to Ruatan in the Bay of Honduras in 1796.[93] Their descendants are the Black Caribs of Honduras, Belize, Nicaragua and Guatemala's Caribbean Coast. In the 1700s, the Spanish on Nicaragua's Pacific Coast also deported the rebellious Black Caribs to Trujillo.[94] The Garífuna are rarely discussed as a distinctively Nicaraguan ethnic group. This was because as Frank Lopez M., the Garífuna representative to the 1980s autonomy negotiations stated, "[M]any leaders in the past said that we were ‘Trujianos’, that is, ‘Honduran’" because that was where the British and the Spanish deported them.[95]

---

[92] Freeland, A Special Place, 33-51.

[93] Lux, Historical Dictionary, pp. 15, 232.

[94] Newson, Indian Survival, 359n126

In addition to physically resembling the African immigrants, the Garífunas also share cultural and linguistic characteristics with the Caribs who originated in South America and inhabited the Lesser Antilles during the European conquest and colonialization. The Caribs were described by the Spaniards as war-like cannibals although the evidence for systematic "cannibalism" is scant; there is little evidence of it in the Caribs recorded in South or Central America.[96] Douglas Taylor discussed the charge of Carib cruelty in The Black Carib of British Honduras. He pointed out that the reports varied and were even contradictory. Most reports come from the Spanish who, for example, under Ponce de Leon were repulsed by Caribs in 1515 on *Kalukaira* ("spikey country") which is today Guadeloupe. Another Spanish contingent was defeated in 1520 when Diego Colon attempted to settle the island.[97] In Spanish documentations, the Caribs are described as blood-thirsty and savage. However, in 1596 Sir Anthony Sherley described the same Caribs as "kind Indians" who bathed and nursed his sick and diseased crew.[98] According to French sources, the Caribs were 'melancholy, fanciful, individualistic, indolent,' that is, "except in regard to their wives, to alcohol, and to revenge."[99] Taylor also pointed out that in French sources the Caribs were described as "unacquisitive and unambitious; but none who knew them well accuses them of cruelty."[100]

---

[95] Lopez M., Greetings during the Autonomy Commission Conference, June 23-27, 1985; in Autonomy, 21.

[96] Kirkpatrick Sale discusses the "myth of cannibalism" in his work, The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy (New York: Knopf, 1990); Newson in Indian Survival suggests that there was "ceremonial cannibalism" among Chorotega and Nicarao chiefs which entailed male war captives being cut into pieces and stewed with chili peppers and salt; maize was eaten as a side-dish; see 54, 73, 83, 102, 122. This was not a standard practice.

[97] Taylor, The Black Caribs of British Honduras (New York: Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc., 1951), 16.

The Caribs "discovered" the Lesser Antilles well before the Columbus landed on *Guanahaní* (which he renamed San Salvador) in The Bahama Islands in 1492.[101] At that time *Guanahaní* was populated by Lucayans (Arawak), as were many of the islands. The Caribs were primarily on the islands of Trinidad and Jamaica, although they roamed to other islands in the Antilles including Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and St. Vincent.[102] In 1770, the Black Caribs on St. Vincent, fearing that white settlers might encroach upon their land or possibly ship them abroad, staged an uprising. The Carib War lasted into 1772 and, despite the restoration of peace by the Government forces, cohabitation was uneasy. In 1785, runaway slaves led by Balla rebelled against the British on the Island of Dominica. During the French Revolution the Black Caribs on St. Vincent were stirred to rebellion, resulting in heavy British casualties between 1795 and 1797. The end result was that the British representative Sir Ralph Abercromby deported some 5,000 Black Caribs from St. Vincent and Dominica to some of the other islands.[103] In 1798 the British shipped the rebellious survivors to the island of Rúatan/Roatan in the Bay of Honduras. Like many slaves who endured the cruel hardship of sailing conditions, over half of the Caribs died.[104] Some 2,000 survived and of these, some escaped to the mainland along Honduras' northern coast.

---

[98] Richard Hakluyt, The principal navigations, voyages, traffiques & discoveries of the English nation, 12 volumes (Glasgow, 1903-5), vol.7, 213-222.

[99] Taylor, The Black Caribs, 17.

[100] Taylor, The Black Caribs, 17.

[101] R.N. Murray, West Indian History (Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1971), 28; also E.H. Carter, G.W. Digby and R.N. Murray, History of the West Indian Peoples (London: Nelson, 1971).

[102] Paul Albury, The Story of the Bahamas (London: Macmillan, 1975), 14, 18-19.

In Central America, the Black Caribs are an admixture of St. Vincent and Grenadian Caribs and escaped slaves from other Caribbean islands, as well as slaves from two ships wrecked off the Island of Bequía in the seventeenth century. From this period to the present, they coexisted with the Yucatec Maya and the Miskitos. The Creoles called them *Waika* ("brother-in-law") because of the shared African ancestry.[105] The language of the Black Caribs or Garifuna is a combination of *Iñeri* (Arawak-Maipure family) and *Kalina* (Guiana Carib); some 30 per cent of the vocabulary and concepts originate from *Kalina* but the structure is basically Arawak.[106] From 1880 to about 1910, the vigourous trade in bananas and mahogany attracted a number of Garífunas to Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast plantations, especially in the areas of Bluefields and Pearl Lagoon.[107] Most Garífunas can be found on Honduras' Atlantic Coast and in Belize although there are longstanding enclaves in Nicaragua and on Guatemala's Atlantic Coast.

---

[103] Murray, West Indian History, 59; Lux, Historical Dictionary, 15, 232.

[104] Taylor, The Black Caribs.

[105] Taylor, The Black Caribs, 40.

VII.10. The Mestizo Experiences

Mestizos constitute the majority of the Atlantic Coast's population. They are of an Indian-European admixture.[108] Historically, they are first mentioned as inhabiting the Coast around the 1860s, a period which coincided with the presence of foreign investments and, as noted above, the arrival of Garífunas.[109] In 1886, Mestizos who originated from Granada founded the town of Rama which is presently inhabited by Ramas. The town became a flourishing center of commerce between the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts. During the 1940s and World War II, there was an influx of labourers from the Pacific Coast to work in the gold mines, rubber industries and plantations. As the cattle and cotton industries developed on the Pacific Coast, there was a noted decline in the influx of labourers. In general, the reincorporation set in place the ascendancy of the Mestizos as their Spanish heritage put them in good stead with the governments on the Pacific Coast.[110]

---

[106] Taylor, The Black Caribs, 41, 41n1, 42-68.

[107] W.V. Davidson, "The Garífuna of Pearl Lagoon: Ethnohistory of an Afro-American Enclave in Nicaragua," Ethnohistory 27, 1 (Winter 1980), 31-47; also Edmundo Gordon, "History, Identity, Consciousness and Revolution," Ethnic Groups and the Nation State: The Case of the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1987), 135-168.

[108] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 122.

[109] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 6.

Under Somoza, Mestizos held key positions in administration, economics and commercial jobs. Mestizos, along with Creoles who were generally better educated, were at the top of the social and ethnic hierarchy which existed from Somoza to the Revolution. As will be discussed, ethnic competition and conflicts abound on the Atlantic Coast. The Mestizos' marked difference in ethnicity, culture and class, exacerbated these tensions. In the early 1980s about 95 per cent of Mestizos lived in the western parts of the department of Zelaya.

This history is part of the indigenous/ethnic reality of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. Understanding how these groups confronted the complex and multiple changes in the history which preceeded 1979 might certainly influence how *Sandinista*-Miskito relations are understood in the years to come. The vibrant, sometimes harmonious, often conflictual politics of the Coast were grounded in diverse political and historical experiences.

---

[110] Freeland, A Special Place, 26-27.

From these divergent ethnohistorical profiles, I now turn to the third purpose of this chapter which is to provide a more integrated analysis of the shared ethnohistorical, national and international political relations of *costeños* during the 1800s and onwards. Specifically, I examine the developments which culminated in the first experience of autonomy on the Atlantic Coast and the eventual end of autonomy in martial law.

VII.11. Roots of *Klauna iwanka* or Autonomy

By the 1800s, these various indigenous and ethnic groups, of diverse political histories, and collectively known as *costeños*, were cohabiting in the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. Of these, Ramas, Sumus, Miskitos, Creoles, Garífunas and Mestizos were considered the principal inhabitants. In addition, there were the various groups which immigrated to the area as traders, missionaries and/or investors. These included both European hide traders and those engaged in the African slave trade, German and United States missionaries, multinationals, and least mentioned, the Chinese immigrants who worked mostly in retail.[111] With few exceptions, the social developments in the area were promoted by the missionaries. The central schools and health clinics of the area were developed by the Moravians, followed by the Anglicans, Catholics and Seventh Day Adventists who arrived later.

---

[111] See Linda Newson, Indian Survival in Colonial Nicaragua (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

With the emergence of transnationals, the social structures and power dynamics began to change. The Miskitos, the former middle men for the British, lost much of their influence and were replaced by the Creoles as the dominant ethnic influence. The more traditional Ramas and Sumus continued as before, taking on jobs in the foreign corporations, especially in mining where many developed lung diseases.[112] Their numbers did not increase much. The Garífunas, who actually constitute about 40 per cent of Belize's population, are only tangentially referred to in many modern analyses of the area, partly because they were considered "Hondurans." The Creoles were to experience ebbs and flows in their influence in local government and political economy. As I will discuss in the pages to follow, with reincorporation and the arrival of the United States, Creole influence decreased and Mestizos ascended to the top of the social ladder.

The mid-1800s witnessed the arrival of other important and long lasting influences among the Miskitos. With the encouragement of the British consul Patrick Walker, the Moravian Church of Germany sent a number of its missionaries to the Coast in 1849 and they established permanent missions.[113] The German missionaries learned Miskito, lived simply and converted a number of the peoples of the Coast, especially Miskitos and Creoles, to be Moravian Protestants. They also translated their hymns and the Christian Bible into Miskito. This further demarcated the area from the Spanish-speaking Catholics on the Pacific Coast. To this day, the Moravian Church remains a central force in the area. As well, the strong Miskito loyalty to the British continued, fuelling the on-going hostilities between Britain and the United States, whose investors were flocking to the countries of Central America.

---

[112] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 6-8; and Freeland, A Special Place, 15-31.

The two foreign powers came to the brink of war over the Mosquito Coast in the 1840s with the launching of the Monroe Doctrine and United States interests in building an interoceanic canal in Nicaragua. The result was the signing of the Treaty of Managua in 1860.[114] Although the signatories of the Treaty did not include the Miskitos, it granted them virtual self-government. The Treaty required that a Miskito Reserve be created under Nicaraguan sovereignty. The power of self-government was under the jurisdiction of the Miskito King. However, as will be discussed in the following section, the business of government was run primarily by Creoles and this raised questions about the Treaty's intent vis-a-vis the other peoples of the area. The Treaty effectively diminished Britain's hold on its protectorate. Later, this was further solidified with the transferral of responsibilities for the Moravian missions to the United States' Society for Propagating the Gospel Among Heathens in 1916.[115] The United States missionaries not only inculcated Protestant beliefs, but also promoted pro-United States sentiments. The arrival of corporations from the United States in the 1880s heralded the fostering of strong economic ties. It was often said that it was easier to get to the Atlantic Coast from New Orleans than it was from Managua.[116] By 1890 there was an estimated ten million dollars invested in the area in lumber, bananas and mining.[117]

---

[113] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 123; Vilas, "The Moravian Church," State, Class & Ethnicity, 33-54. Good archival sources would be at the Moravian Mission at Herrnhut in the former German Democratic Republic.

[114] Ortíz, "Indigenous Rights," 46-47.

To a large extent, the early postcolonial period continued to be defined by foreign influences. Where in the colonial period the struggle was between Britain and Spain, in the postcolonial period the struggle was between Britain and the United States for regional power and economic dominance over the Miskito Coast. Several legal documents provide useful insights into how the area and the peoples were to become defined. Four stand out as important: first, the 1860 Treaty of Managua which actually ended British territorial aspirations; second, the Mosquito Reserve Constitution; third, the

---

[115] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 123.

[116] Bourgois, "Nicaragua's Ethnic Minorities," 30.

[117] Eduardo Peréz-Valle, "Intereses Northamericanos en la Reserva 1882-1892," Expédiente de Campos Azules, Historia de Bluefields en sus documentos (Managua, 1978), 137-144.

1894 Reincorporation Decree or Mosquito Convention which gave the Republic of Nicaragua sovereignty over the area; and fourth, the 1905 Harrison-Altamirano Treaty which dealt with Creole rights and entitlements.[118]

The Treaty of Managua, signed on January 28, 1860 resulted from direct negotiations between the British and the Nicaraguan government under Zelaya. Although initially signed to give power to the Miskito King, loyal to the British Crown, the end result was also the legal marginalization of the other groups. They were denied rights to their land or the possibility of their own forms of self-government. Article 2 incorporated "the Misquito Indians within the territory of the Republic of Nicaragua" and this satisfied the Nicaraguan government's demand not to have the country divided in theory, if not in practice since for all intents and purposes, the country was divided.[119] Article 3 of the Treaty guaranteed the Miskitos the right to govern themselves and also "all other persons residing in said District, according to their [Miskitos'] own customs, and in conformance with the regulations which from time to time may be adopted by them," and insofar as they were compatible with Nicaraguan sovereignty. This made legally binding the Miskitos' right to rule not only Sumus and Ramas according to Miskito customs, but also Creoles, Garífunas and Mestizos. This legal entrenchment of Miskito ethnic dominance might have been influenced by the fact that none of the indigenous and ethnic populations were privy to the negotiations or to the content of the Treaty of Managua.

---

[118] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 124.

[119] The content of this section draws upon Mattelart's, "Trabil Nani," 123-26; and Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 26-30.

Three other articles of great significance for the peoples of the area were Articles 4, 5 and 6 because they specified the political powers derived from the autonomy status. According to Article 4, the Miskitos had the legal authority to decide "at any future time" whether they wanted to be fully incorporated into the Republic of Nicaragua. It was stipulated that should the Miskitos decide to do so, they would then be subjected to Nicaraguan laws as opposed to "their own customs and regulations."[120] Further, under Article 5, the Republic of Nicaragua agreed to pay the Miskitos some 5,000 pesos annually for their "social betterment" and the maintenance of the established authority on the Miskito Reserve. Article 6 of the Treaty best captured the fact that none of the ethnic groups on the Atlantic Coast had a role in directly shaping its contents. It states that "[H]is British majesty agrees to use his good offices with the Chief of the Mosquito Indians, so that they will accept the stipulations contained in this Convention," *post facto*.[121]

In this way, the Republic of Nicaragua obtained authority over an area first defined by the British as the Mosquito Coast and under the dominion of the Miskito King. Although the British did obtain "the good graces" of the Miskito Chief (or *wihta*), the latter really had no power to alter the Treaty. The Creoles, Garífunas, Sumus and Ramas were placed under Miskito rule and customs without regard to cultural relevance or the sometimes hostile political history between the various groups. There were many contradictions, including, as noted earlier, the fact that the Miskitos left much of the Reserve government's administration to the Creoles. The relationship between the *costeños* was a complex one and apparently incomprehensible to non-*costeños'*.[122] Representatives from both the Republic of Nicaragua and the United States refused to accept the relationship between Miskitos and Creoles as legitimate or at least used this as a pretext to undermine the government's loyalty to the British.

---

[120] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 28.

[121] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 24-25.

The Nicaraguan government reneged on its 5,000 pesos payment on the grounds that the Miskito Reserve was not being governed by Miskitos, but rather persons variously termed "Jamaicans" and "Negros."[123] It was also claimed that the Jamaicans actually selected the Miskito Chief. This painted a picture of a docile people which is not compatible with the reality of the Miskitos and certainly not the institution of the Miskito King. It also ignored the fact that Miskito Kings were men educated in Jamaica or Britain.

---

[122] C.L. Dozier, Nicaragua's Mosquito Shore: The Years of British and American Presence (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1985), 150.

[123] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 29.

The image of docility was promoted by the Zelaya government's envoy and the United States. The evidence does not suggest docility so much as the fact that the Miskitos were willing to let others govern insofar as that governing did not interfere with their customs. It was also the case that the nature of the government and the role of the Creoles was established in the Reserve Constitution. The disagreement came to a head in 1862 when the Chief-King of the Miskito Reserve George Augustus Frederick died and the Nicaraguan government suggested the Reserve government was not legitimate.

The British supported the government of the Miskito Reserve which took the case to international arbitration. In 1881, the Emperor of Austria found in favour of the government of the Reserve and required that the government of Nicaragua reinstitute the Treaty of Managua's stipulation to pay 5,000 pesos to the government of the Miskito Reserve. The Emperor determined that the Treaty of Managua granted the government of Nicaragua only partial sovereignty over the Mosquito Coast and Reserve. According to Article 1 of the Imperial Arbitration, the sovereignty of Nicaragua "is not full and unlimited with respect to the territory assigned to the Mosquito Indians...but rather limited by the self-government recognized for the Mosquito Indians." Hence, actions in the interests of Nicaraguan sovereignty had to be consistent with Article 3 of the Treaty of Managua.

Secondly, Article 5 of the Imperial Arbitration stated that the Republic of Nicaragua could not grant concessions to exploit "the natural products of the territory assigned to the Mosquito Indians" since this was a right of the government of the Miskito Reserve. Additionally Article 6 denied Nicaragua the right to interfere with the commerce of the government of the Miskito Reserve; it could not levy duties on imports nor could it tax the earnings of the government. Thus, it was the government of the Miskito Reserve, governed by the Creoles who were under the influence of the British, which granted concessions for the massive economic investments which developed in the mid to late 1800s.

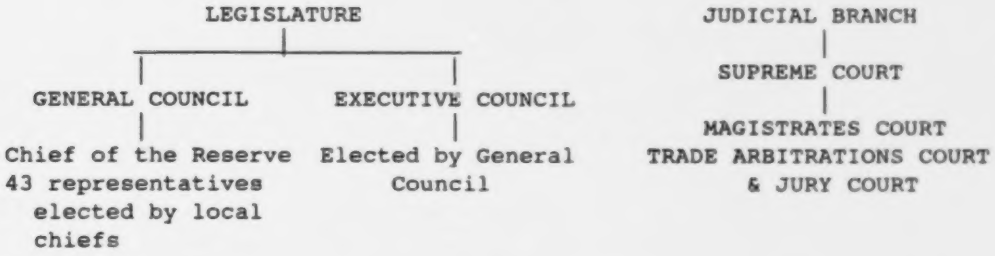
In the interim period, between the 1860 Treaty of Managua and the 1881 Imperial findings of the Austrian Emperor, there was a meeting of fifty-one *wihta* (or headmen) who examined and approved a Municipal Constitution (Figure IV). The latter had been proposed by the British consul and it established a form of government which was a combination of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence and traditional African and indigenous land practices.[124] It should be noted that of the fifty-one *wihta*, thirty-three were from the Creole-dominated areas of Bluefields, Pearl Lagoon and Corn Island.[125]

---

[124] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 31.

[125] B.I. Teplitz, "The Political and Economic Foundation of Modernization in Nicaragua: The Administration of Jose Santos Zelaya 1893-1909." Ph.D. Dissertation, 352, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

Figure IV
MISKITO RESERVE[126]
Municipal Constitution (1861)


LEGISLATURE
GENERAL COUNCIL
Chief of the Reserve
43 representatives elected by local chiefs
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Elected by General Council
JUDICIAL BRANCH
SUPREME COURT
MAGISTRATES COURT
TRADE ARBITRATIONS COURT
& JURY COURT

There were several features of the approved Constitution worthy of note here. First, the General Council would be responsible for the making of laws and the naming of officials. The Executive Council, which was elected by the General Council, was responsible for judicial and fiscal issues.[127] This system structurally benefitted the English-speaking Creole since matters of government were conducted in English and many indigenous peoples could not easily converse in the language. Further, all of the thirty-three representatives from Bluefields, Pearl Lagoon and Corn Island became part of the General Council and ultimately constituted two-thirds of the Executive Council. The Creole representation was disproportionate to their numbers at about 2,000 Creoles compared to 10,000-15,000 "Indians."[128] The number of Garífunas was not factored in apparently because they were considered (British) Hondurans. As noted, some interpreted this preponderance of Creoles in power as the displacement of Miskitos.[129]

---

[126] Mosquito Reservation, Formation of the Municipal Authority for the Government of the Mosquito Reservation (New York: Burr Printing House, 1884).

This Creole administration was later called "alien" by the United States. It made at least one Nicaraguan envoy declare that it "made a laughingstock" of the Treaty of Managua between Nicaragua and Great Britain.[130] However, given the Mosquito Constitution and its form of representation, the Creole influence made perfect sense, particularly since they, unlike most Miskitos, understood English. They also shared a part African heritage and thus the fact that they cooperated was only of surprise to those who were used to race separation and divisions. Of course, given the fact that the Miskito King was educated in Jamaica and Britain, his association with the British and Creoles also made sense and this might call into question his own loyalty to Miskitos more generally. Thus, for example, Bedford Pim, who served on the Atlantic Coast as part of the Royal Navy, wrote in 1863 that "[H]is Majesty is a pure-blooded Mosquito Indian...completely English in his habits and dress; and having received an excellent education in Jamaica, he considers English to be his own language...."[131] The loyalty of the Miskito King to

---

[127] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 31.

[128] Charles Bell, "Remarks on the Mosquito Territory, its Climate, People, Productions, &c, &c; with a Map," Royal Geographic Society Journal 32 (1862), 250; and 242-268.

[129] Dozier, Nicaragua's Mosquito Shore, 150; Teplitz, "The Political and Economic Foundation," 350.

[130] Dozier, Nicaragua's Mosquito Shore, 150.

[131] Commander Pim, The Gate of the Pacific (London: Lovell Reed and Co., 1863), quoted in Freeland, A Special Place, 22.

other Miskitos was only tangentially the concern of the Nicaraguans from the Pacific Coast. They wanted power over the area and the Miskito King and the British were obstacles.

Another major feature of the Miskito Reserve's Municipal Constitution was the establishment of a judiciary. The judiciary was similar to the Anglo-Saxon tradition as well. The Magistrates Court was responsible for civil and criminal cases as well as the police. The Trade Arbitration Court was a special court designed to deal locally with trade disputes. The Jury Court was another special court which dealt with government corruption, embezzlement and similar offenses (today called "white collar" crimes). Perhaps most significant, the *wihta* passed a law which guaranteed *costeños* the right of habeas corpus. This was some 32 years before the same guarantee was recognized in the Nicaraguan Constitution (1893) on the Pacific Coast. There could be no searches or seizures without warrants and no accused could be imprisoned without due process of law, thus guaranteeing the accused the right to defense before peers.

The fiscal impact of these laws was to create significant tensions between the government of the Reserve and central government in Nicaragua. In 1861, the ports of the Mosquito Reserve were made free by the General Council and this free zone was extended to Bluefields in 1890. The Reserve Government was also printing its own currency; however this was actually a period when there was no national currency within the Republic of Nicaragua. Two years later, the General Council passed a law to protect traditional lands and villages. The elements of the law drew upon indigenous and African conceptions of land ownership. In October 1863 a land commission was established to administer the use of land and to designate forests. Land could be leased but not sold and the rent was to be used in the interests of the villages. Similarly, profits from selling the produce of that collectively owned land had to be reinvested for the well-being of the villages.[132] Elementary education became compulsory in 1875. This education was provided mostly by the religious institutions.

These laws were followed by others which were not welcomed by the central government in Nicaragua and which were not perceived to be in the interests of foreign investors to the area. In 1883 the Reserve government passed a law to be effective March 1884 which cancelled the debts primarily of the Creoles and indigenous people. The act was consistent with protecting the general populace since foreigners would grant loans to poor *costeños* although they had no way of paying back the loans. This would place the *costeños* at the continuing mercy of the foreigners, some of whom would require the poor *costeños* to substitute labour for loans, establishing a form of indentured servitude. The Reserve Government abolished the debtors prison; this was a full thirty years before a similar law was instituted nationally.[133] According to Teplitz, "[T]he system may have disadvantaged alien creditors, but foreigners' complaints about Mosquito statutes and court actions showed that the legislature and judiciary acted to protect the masses, a situation unique in nineteenth-century Nicaragua."[134] The Reserve government also placed taxes on goods imported from the Pacific Coast of Nicaragua, refused to recognize as legally binding navigation permits issued in Nicaragua and finally, refused to accept troops from the Republic of Nicaragua in Bluefields.[135] These financial and military rights denied, Zelaya resorted to a military occupation of the area in 1894. Before discussing the latter, there was one other development on the Atlantic Coast which contributed to the actions of Zelaya and that is the power of the Creoles or what his envoy called "aliens."

---

[132] Mosquito Reservation, Formation of the Municipal Authority (1884), 21-23.

[133] Larry Laird, "Origenes de la reincorporación Nicaraguense de

In the mid-1800s a number of Creole English-speaking Jamaican merchants began immigrating to the area and many became permanent residents. Their language skills favoured them and many obtained low-level administrative jobs. By 1893 these merchants were running the administrative affairs of the area. This situation was looked upon unfavourably by the European immigrants and the Nicaraguans (of Spanish descent on the Pacific Coast), as well as later United States investors. On March 16, 1894, Rigoberto Cabezas reported to

---

la Costa Atlantica," Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano 140 (1972), 1-57.

[134] Teplitz, "The Political and Economic Foundation," 352.

[135] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 31-32.

President Jose Santos Zelaya that there were two dominant groups on the Atlantic Coast: "Bluefields is composed of...blacks and smugglers: this should be sufficient to understand the atmosphere in which we live."[136] The smugglers were the European immigrants but the presence of Creole blacks was seen as more "difficult" for those accustomed to dominating slaves as opposed to equally cohabitating with them.

This situation evoked a similar response from a special envoy of the Nicaraguan government on April 30, 1894. The envoy claimed that the Indian reserves were being governed by "a foreign oligarchy which truly made a laughingstock of the accords between Nicaragua and Great Britain...a group of Jamaicans."[137] He argued that these blacks, like the indigenous peoples, did not have "for persons and property the guarantees assured by the educated [European, white] nations of the world." Moreover, he found problematic their "exotic laws imported by Jamaican colonists." In the envoy's view, and consistent with the racist ideology of the times, neither Jamaicans nor "Indians" were people who governed according to "civilized" guarantees of legal rights and private property. The fact that civilized nations, unlike "primitive" nations, needed legal guarantees might have suggested that something was wrong with the nature of "civilized" societies as opposed to the other way around. This was an irony which escaped the envoy. European conceptions of rights and property imported onto the Atlantic Coast became the theoretically "superior" way of relating.

---

[136] Rigoberto Cabezas cited in Eduardo Peréz Valle, Expédient de Campos Azules, 159.

[137] Nicaraguan envoy cited in Eduardo Perez Valle, Expediente de Campos Azules, 183-209; and cited in Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 39.

The envoy considered a government of Creoles to be a laughable matter, not one which would garner European credibility for the Nicaraguan government. The implication, quite compatible with the pervasive racism of the day, was that Africans were incapable of governing. The Creoles were in fact governing but the envoy, Carlos Alberto Lacayo's claims were contingent on prejudices, not the actual facts of the situation. According to Lacayo, the Nicaraguan government's Commissioner to the area:

> What existed until yesterday...is a black oligarchy, whose political and administrative immorality and the corruption of their origins would justify, if there were no other causes, the destitution which their members have been caused to suffer.[138]

Lacayo's characterization of the African slave origins of the Creoles as corrupt, and their presence in political and administrative positions as immoral, was consistent with the sentiments of the time. In his view, African heritage was reason enough to justify causing them to suffer destitution. Racism and the recent history of slavery made it improbable that he would look at the fact that were it not for the initiatives and governance by the Creoles, there would have been anarchy, if not chaos. More probably, the foreign investors would have simply plundered the area without due regard for negotiating with the peoples of the area. The opposition to the Jamaicans was both racial and economic. The ignorance of many colonial administrators about the African empires from which the slaves were captured allowed them to perpetuate their attitudes of superiority over the non-white peoples. However, the English language abilities and administrative experiences of the Jamaicans made them a legitimate force to be reckoned with. Moreover, it was precisely because the Creole government was so effective that both the Nicaraguan government and the North American investors were so interested in having the Creoles removed.

---

[138] Pedro J. Cuadra Chamorro, La Reincorporación de la Mosquitia (Granada, no pub., 1944), 13-14.

These anti-(black) Jamaican sentiments, veiled by the language of "the best interests of the Miskito Indians," were again repeated with the arrival of the banana and lumber companies from the United States in the nineteenth century and another influx of descendants of African slaves. This latest group was mostly from the Lesser Antilles and the southern United States. According to the government officials of the United States, itself fresh from its tradition of slavery, "[A]n alien administration, in other interests than those of the Indians, notoriously exists, especially at Bluefields. Nobody is deceived by calling this authority a Mosquito Indian government."[139]

---

[139] Dozier, Nicaragua's Mosquito Shore, 150; B.I. Teplitz, "The Political and Economic Foundation," 350.

It is dubious that the United States was interested in who governed the Indians so much as to whom the Reserve government was loyal; Britian or the United States. In Chapter II, it was pointed out that this was a period when the United States, especially the Dixie, was segregated and where "Negroes" were legally segregated according to the doctrine of "separate but equal." Although not all representatives of the United States were racist -- this is not the claim -- the social condition was not one which fostered equality and respect across ethnicities. At that time, loyalty was still to Britain and this was the cause for concern of those seeking profit. It was at this cumulative point in 1894, the Zelaya government intervened and imposed martial law, education in Spanish, and the area was renamed the Department of Zelaya.[140] The United States promoted this move since it saw the decline of British influence and the creation of a space for United States economic investments.

In conjunction with the Zelaya government, the various ethnic communities were encouraged to sign the Reincorporation Decree, otherwise known as the Miskito Convention.[141] The Convention exempted the "Indians" from taxes and military services. Although it stated that revenues generated locally would be reinvested, this was under the jurisdiction of the central government in Managua.[142] This development, in addition to a 1905 agreement dealing with Creole rights and the implications for indigenous autonomy and Creole marginalization, will be discussed later. What is important to emphasize at this juncture is the fact that the year 1894 thus marked a watershed in relations between the Pacific and the Atlantic Coast. The incorporation seriously curtailed the extent to which *costeños* legally could exercise the right to autonomy from the Republic of Nicaragua. As noted in the previous section, the government of Nicaragua sent an envoy to the area and the latter declared the Reserve government had been usurped by Jamaicans who allowed the indigenous groups to maintain extravagant customs, to accept polygamy and to live under a government which instituted exotic laws by "Jamaican colonists." The envoy particularly objected to what he understood to be the absence of guarantees for individual and property. These guarantees were, for him, the hallmark of "civilized" nations.

---

[140] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 40-42.

[141] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 124.

[142] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 124.

Whether the Zelaya government was reacting to the potential loss of revenue for the nation-state, the continued British influence in the area, or the concerns of foreign investors, is open to speculation. All of these may have played a role in the military occupation in 1894. Further, the Nicaraguan government position was challenged by various delegations and petitioners from the Atlantic Coast including the Miskito King. One of these was an address by delegates of Miskito Headmen to Captain Carzon-Howe on March 17, 1894.[143] Captain Carzon-Howe had landed on Bluefields on February 25, 1894. Two days later, a contingent of British marines under the command of Lieutenant Colmore arrived to the relief of the government of the Miskito Reserve. Of particular note, the Headmen argued:

> It has come to our knowledge that a gross misrepresentation has been made to you by the Spanish authorities, showing that we Indians have already agreed to annex our country to Nicaragua because we have been brutally ill-treated by the Negroes. This we flatly deny. The Indians in Nicaraguan territory have often to run over to us here to escape from the ill-use of the Nicaraguan authorities. Should the Commissioner produce any names, we positively declare it a forgery. We have no sympathies in common with Nicaragua, and do not wish to mix with Nicaraguans, as we know what sort of people they are.[144]

This petition by indigenous leaders, very clearly asserting their own authority and difference from the Nicaraguans, belied the latters' claims to the contrary. It contradicted the Nicaraguan assertions of their passivity and also of their domination by Negroes. In fact, the Miskitos not only asserted their sympathies for indigenous groups on the Pacific Coast, they also asserted their support for the Negroes and against the Nicaraguans who were still associated with the Spanish. In effect, these were no savages nor peoples passively governed by "exotic" laws as Zelaya's Commissioner Carlos Alberto Lacayo had argued unless by "exotic" is understood solidarity with those the Nicaraguans considered inferior: indigenous peoples and former slaves.

---

[143] Miskito Headmen, "A Miskito Address to the British captain," (Bluefields, Mosquito Reserve, Nicaragua, March 17, 1894) in Oertzen, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 370.

[144] The document was marked "X" by George Haymond, Theodor Bartholes, Bayona, Alexander Pineer, Elario McLean, Robert, Davis, Marsaline, Dunns, Thomas, Mistrikel, Gilbert, Bill Vaughans, Tonic, Reno, Sassit, Santana, Thompson, Silis and Siwa. The interpreter who signed was George P. Hall. See Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 370-372.

It is also the case that the occupation followed the failure of Lacayo in his attempts to bribe the Reserve government. Lacayo had offered to make Chief Clarence a general for life in the Nicaraguan military.[145] The Vice-president C. Patterson and the Attorney General J.W. Cuthburt, both Creoles, had refused the offer of benefits such as life-time pensions. As well, efforts to bribe the *wihtas*, the General Council and other Reserve government officials failed. The occupation was followed by a number of petitions through the representative of the British Crown in Bluefields. On March 8, Robert Henry Clarence, Chief of the Mosquitos, submitted a petition to the Earl of Rosebury signed by some 1,746 persons, many of whom were probably Creoles; some of the petitioners names were simply marked "X."[146]

---

[145] Teplitz, "The Political and Economic Foundations," 356; Lioba Rossbach and Volker Wüenderich, "Derechos indigenas y estado nacional en Nicaragua: La Convención Mosquita de 1894," Encuentro 24-25 (April-September, 1985), 29-53; Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 38-39.

[146] Clarence, "To Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, Queen of Great Britian and Ireland, and Empress of India," Confidential Print 6547 (Jan.-June, 1894) in Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 89-104. All page references to Clarence is from this text.

In his petition, Chief Clarence wrote that 200 Nicaraguan troops, authorized by Zelaya, had landed on the Atlantic Coast at nine o'clock at night. They were armed with guns, bayonets, revolvers, knives and other weaponry.[147] Zelaya's troops took over the offices of the Reserve government and hoisted the Nicaraguan flag. According to Chief Clarence, his people were "insulted" by the invasion and "kept in slavish fear," by the Nicaraguan troops. In his petition to the Crown, Clarence observed that the Nicaraguan government had "not the slightest interest, sympathy, or good feelings for the inhabitants of the Mosquito Reservation; and as our manners, customs, religion, laws, and language are not in accord, there can never be a unity."[148] Thus he "begged" the Queen to take the Reserve under her Empire's protection in order to counteract the forcible incorporation and the disrespect for "the consent of the people."[149] Further, he described the Nicaraguans as "tramps, speculators, and men of the baser sort" who always resorted to unfair means. In effect, Chief Clarence, with all of his British manners, was quite offended by what he considered to be the uncultured Spanish. Moreover, the petition demonstrated his ability to speak on behalf of the Reserve and with some respect for gaining the consent of the various indigenous and ethnic populations. Lacayo had suggested otherwise in his reports.

---

[147] Clarence, "To Her Most Gracious Majesty," 367.

[148] Clarence, "To Her Most Gracious Majesty," 368.

[149] Clarence, "To Her Most Gracious Majesty," 368.

Another petition was made by John O. Thomas, a Creole. He petitioned the United States' Minister, Mr. Baker, upon the latter's arrival in Bluefields on April 28, 1894.[150] Thomas pointed out that he had relocated to Nicaragua from Jamaica in September 1859 because he had some capital that he wanted to invest in a new country. In his petition Thomas extolled the virtues of the Reserve inhabitants and the abundance of resources of the area. He had found the lands were great for cultivating a variety of things including coffee, cocoa, sugar cane, anatto, rice, cotton, bananas, coconuts and other tropical fruits and Jamaican ginger. There were also forests of rosewood, mahogany, cedar, pitch pine. Further, the opportunity existed to fish, for turtling; and for selling skins and hides. Thomas stated that the languages of Miskito and English and the Protestant religion, with the Bible being the principal text in the schools were amenable to him. Moreover, "[T]he members of the Mosquito state had their fixed abode, and all who are acquainted with the history of America, and that of the Mosquito, must admit that the Mosquito Indians, and all persons residing among them before the treaty of Managua, enjoyed, occupied, and governed a definite state."[151] As he saw the political organization on the Atlantic

---

[150] Thomas, "The Creole point of view," Foreign Relations of the U.S. 1895, 276-284, in Oertzen et al, The Nicaraguan Mosquitia, 375-378. All quotes from Thomas taken from the latter text.

[151] Thomas, "The Creole point of view," 376.

Coast, the Miskitos exercised both internal and external sovereignty.

Thomas pointed out to the United States' representative that within the Miskito Reserve there was a system of justice in place in which "evil" was punished and "good" upheld. In his view, the Nicaraguans were "jealous of the prosperity of the reserve. We do not speak the same language, we do not profess the same religion, and our institutions and laws and manners and customs are not agreeable to them." However, he also pointed out that these feelings were mutual because "their manner of life and mode of government are obnoxious to us" and, further, neither the indigenous peoples nor foreigners on the Reserve were interested in "their" (Spanish) rule. Moreover, he was definitive in his rejection of Commissioner Lacayo and his misrepresentation of the Reserve government claiming "there is no honour, no truth, nor confidence in the Spanish element" and nothing the Reserve inhabitants had worked so hard for would "be sacred in their hands."[152] Thus in this petition, as with that of Chief Clarence, the differences in ethnicity, culture, religion, language and habits of living were emphasized. Both petitions indicate a profound dislike of the Spanish/Nicaraguans and both rejected as false the claims that incorporation into the Nicaraguan nation-state was something desired by the inhabitants of the Reserve. Nevertheless, martial law ensured that the reincorporation remained in effect.

---

[152] Thomas, "The Creole point of view," 378.

Martial law heralded the abolition of the General Council and its replacement with an Executive Council comprised of twelve non-*costeños* and only three from the area. As well, Creole administrators were replaced by Mestizos brought in from the Pacific. Spanish became the *lingua franca* of the area and schools had to adopt Spanish instead of the more common English and Miskito. Since the Moravian Church was the principal source of education, and few people actually spoke Spanish, many schools closed. Likewise the schools of Seventh Day Adventists and other non-Spanish speaking missions were closed. In fact, this is a period still negatively remembered by the elders on the Atlantic Coast.[153] Although the Reincorporation Decree or Mosquito Convention was passed in 1894 with representatives from the various communities signing it, the latter had very little power to actually do otherwise. The Miskito, Sumus and Ramas received tax and military exemptions. As with the Reserve laws, revenues generated locally were supposed to be reinvested in the villages but this actually did not come to pass. The indigenous groups could do little since the central government controlled revenues.[154] The agreement offered no concessions to the Creoles or Garífunas.

In 1905 the Harrison-Altamirano Treaty sought to redress the Creole exclusion. The Treaty was negotiated between the governments of Nicaragua and Britain, and as with the Treaty of Managua, the peoples of the area had little direct input. The Treaty incorporated the Creoles into tax and military exemptions for 50 years (thus to 1955). It granted recognition to the Miskito and Creole land titles acquired before 1894. If in the interim the land had been granted to other owners, the Treaty agreed to recognize the nearest equivalent. Those *costeños* without land titles were granted eight manzanas (approximately five hectares) of land per family of four, with the number increasing by two manzanas per each additional family member. Each community was granted public grazing land. For the most part, the tenets of this agreement were not followed, including the recognition and adjudication of Indian and Creole lands, public grazing lands and the reinvestment of locally generated revenues.[155]

---

[153] Katherine Yih and Alicia Slate, "Bilinguismo en la Costa Atlantica: La Zona Especial I," Wani 2-3 (May), 15ff.

[154] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 124.

Zelaya's incorporation of the Atlantic Coast into the Nicaraguan nation-state heralded the first time the *costeños* were formally governed by the central government. Despite formal relations, there were no significant interpersonal relations established. In the following section, I will examine the experiences of the *costeños* under the administration of the Nicaraguan nation-state.

VII.12. From Reincorporation to Revolution

The 1894 reincorporation resulted in several significant changes

---

[155] Peréz-Valle, "Exposición de los costeños," Expédiente de Campos Azules, 225-242; Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 124.

within the socio-cultural and political-economic formations on the Atlantic Coast. I pointed out that Spanish became the official language in education, business and international economic transactions. As a consequence, many *costeños* were alienated from the main dynamics of political and economic life. Some schools of the Moravian Church also closed, unable to function in Spanish. Thus, many *costeños* were displaced from schools and government work. There was a reorganization of the Reserve Government. The General Council was eliminated. It was replaced by an Executive Council of 15 members, only three of whom were *costeños*. The Zelaya government sent Mestizos from the Pacific to assume many of the administrative civil servant posts. Creoles and Miskitos, in particular, were displaced by these changes.

In February 1899, there was an attempted coup d'etat in Bluefields. The coup was spearheaded by General Juan Pablo Reyes, whom Zelaya had appointed as regional governor. Reyes was liked by many of the *costeños* because he sought to improve the social infrastructure of the region. Reyes had carried out a variety of development projects: municipal improvements, the construction of a hospital and a large high school. He also had called for the reduction of taxes levied against *costeños*. Thus in February 1899 when the coup was attempted in Bluefields, Reyes had *costeño* support. However, the insurrectionalists were defeated. Later, the *costeños* complained to the National Congress that the "destructive exploitation of the natural resources of this Department by foreign concessionaries...and astute [Nicaraguan] speculators."[156]

The *costeños* particularly objected to the deterioration in education, the corruption among civil servants, the absence of reinvestment by foreigners and those from the Pacific, and the influx of Chinese who were increasingly controlling regional trade.[157] In response to some of the protests on October 5, 1899, Zelaya introduced some new changes to the forms of political representation. The indigenous populations were to be governed by elected mayors from their respective villages.[158]

In the early 1900s, Zelaya promoted the area for investment to the Japanese and the British. Massive concessions were granted to foreign companies in the United States. This included upwards of ten per cent of the land and mining rights to companies from the United States and Canada.[159] The Emery Company of Massachusetts was granted concessions equally about ten per cent of the forests; they had a virtual monopoly on rosewood, mahogany and other precious wood. Similarly, a 1903 concession to the Dietrick Company totalled about one-quarter of Nicaraguan territory, from the Río Coco inland to Jinotega and Nueva Segovia.[160] Although these concessions were subsequently annulled by the Conservative government of General Juan Jose Estrada, the area became a prime locale for speculation. Profits generated locally either found themseves in the hands of the central government or in the home countries of the companies.

---

[156] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 42-43.

[157] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 43.

[158] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 40.

[159] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 124.

The Estrada government annulled the Zelaya government's Constitution of 1893. Several fairly significant developments resulted under the new Estrada government. First, the Moravian schools reopened in Pearl Lagoon and Bluefields after a ten year hiatus.[161] Second, consistent with the 1905 treaty, communal land titles were granted to indigenous villages. However, only an average of two manzanas were granted and this was inadequate for most *costeños'* needs and certainly incongruent with the ecological characteristics of the region; little could be done on such a small area.[162] Further, where emphasis was placed on property rights by the Estrada government, and on land titles, this was meaningless to the indigenous population and the African descendents of the area. For them, the land was associated with community and community projects, not individuals and families exclusively. Moreover, the indigenous peoples were also suspicious of the fact that Mestizos were responsible for land distributions. These developments were protested by some forty-five Sumu and Miskito villages between 1915 and 1920.[163] One consequence of this was the granting of more land titles to Sumus and Miskitos covering a total of 121,079 acres. However, these numbers were minor compared to the land concessions granted to lumber and mining companies and banana plantations such as United Fruit, especially in the area of Wawa River. In 1921, for example, the Bragman Bluff Lumber Company, a subsidiary of Standard Fruit, was granted a 50,000 acres area for pine extraction; this equalled a third of the area granted to Sumus and Miskitos in land titles.[164]

---

[160] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 43.

[161] Eduardo Peréz Valle, Expédiente de Campos Azules (1978), 296-299.

[162] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 44.

The late 1920s and the 1930s were a particularly difficult period. First a plague hit the banana plantations causing serious economic losts, especially for United Fruit, the largest company and one of the biggest employers. Second, by this time the gold and silver mining equipment was becoming quite old and delapidated. Many workers, especially Sumu and Rama Indians who disproportionately worked in the mines, were falling ill to lung diseases such as tuberculosis and silicosis. These workers were often "released" (or fired) without the benefit of health care or pension.[165]

This was also a period in which Sandino conducted his guerrilla campaign against the United States economic domination. Many companies ripped up railway lines and destroyed resources before departing the area. The Nicaraguan Government sought the help of the United States and the Marine occupation between 1912 to 1933 was heavily felt on the Atlantic Coast as a means to protecting the investments of United States citizens and for preserving the 1894 Reincorporation Decree.[166] At that time, Zelaya actually played the United States's economic interests against the influence of the British on the Atlantic Coast. He thought he had less influence with the British but the cultivation of the United States economic interests did not produce allegiance of *costeños* to the central government. Rather, the result was greater dependency on foreign assistance and dependency for wage labour from United States companies who exploited many *costeños*. This exploitation was one of Sandino's principal reasons for fighting and working on the Atlantic Coast. He wrote in 1933 that "rather than accepting all the warm invitations, I will stay here on the Río Coco...to free it from the barbarism to which first feudal colonialism and now capitalist exploitation has subjected it."[167]

---

[163] Jorge Jenkins, "Exposición del Director General de IRENA en el 1 Seminario Nacional de Recursos Naturales y del Ambiente," in IRENA, *Actas del 11 Seminario Nacional de Recursos Naturales y del Ambiente 'Edgar Munguia'"* (Managua, 1980), 171-186.

[164] Vilas, *State, Class & Ethnicity*, 46.

[165] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 124.

Sandino's battles and agricultural cooperatives were joined by some Miskitos including one Adolfo Cockburn, who rose from Deputy to

---

[166] Lester Langley, Banana Wars: An Inner History of American Empire 1900-1924 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 53-72.

[167] Sandino cited in Freeland, A Special Place, 30.

Brigadier General.[168] General Cockburn met the same fate as Sandino; he was assassinated by the National Guards in 1930.[169] Much of Sandino's support came from the disaffected Indian workers who were poorly paid and alienated from their traditional communal practices. The areas around the River Coco and Puerto Cabezas were part of what Sandino called his "Liberated Zone." Many Miskitos, Sumus, Ramas and Mestizos were encouraged by their bosses and the Moravian Church to look upon Sandino's guerrilla army as bandits. His attacks on the United Fruit Company and lumber production were felt by the Sumus, Miskitos and Mestizos who worked for those companies. As well, a number of Miskito communities simply relocated until the armed hostilities had subsided.[170] Sandino's battles on the Pacific Coast did not have the same impact on the Atlantic Coast. Ironically, this was to be the same fate met by the *Sandinistas*. Nevertheless, after Sandino was assassinated by the National Guards in 1934, Miskitos and Sumus along the river suffered considerable repression. According to Freeland, the Moravian recordings of the oral histories of one of the Miskito village in the 1940s recount the murder of indigenous peoples whose bodies were tossed into the water, leaving it "red and sorrowful" for months.[171] One Miskito woman in Jinotega, then 80 years old, told of working for Sandino against the occupation by United States marines in the 1920s. According to Candida Cardenales, when Sandino was assassinated, "[W]e fled along the Rio Bocay. Somoza's army caught up to us and killed some of the others in the group. The rest of us escaped by climbing up a mountain."[172]

---

[168] Anastasio Somoza, El verdadero Sandino ò el Calvario de Las Segovias' eda. Edición (Managua: Edit y Lito "San José," 1976), cited in Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 125.

[169] Ortíz, "Indigenous Rights," 47.

[170] Freeland, A Special Place, 30.

With the arrival to power of Anastasio Somoza Garcia, the patriarch of the dictatorship, things on the Coast continued much as before. Somoza allowed the area and the peoples to be exploited by foreign companies and was simply content to collect his share of the profits. Despite the profits secured on the Coast, the area itself was in a state of virtual depression well into the 1960s. During this period, there was a new wave of investment in fisheries, including the establishment of processing plants. Shrimp, lobster and turtles were harvested for export and in the absence of regulation, stocks were soon depleted.[173] This had a dual impact on the peoples of the area. First, their traditional foods were derived from small-scale farming of cassava and rice and fishing (mostly fish or turtle). With paid labour this traditional way of life declined and as stocks were depleted from over-fishing, so too did seafood in the diet. Further, remote villages increasingly became dependent upon the processing and transportation plants dominated by the Mestizos.[174] Second, the appetite for foreign food meant that preference was given to canned imports, further reducing the production of traditional foods. This was especially the case among Mestizo and Creole fishermen who interacted directly with United States markets by selling their catch. Creoles also took jobs with the shipping companies which did business at the Atlantic Coast ports and disproportionately had opportunities to study abroad and secure "white collar" jobs. This was less so among the Sumus and Ramas who fell back into their traditional practice of subsistence farming, which had been preserved by the women of their communities.[175]

---

[171] Freeland, A Special Place, 30.

[172] "Jinotega's Miskitos and Sumus: Little Noted Victims of Contra War," Envío 8, 95 (June 1989), 14.

[173] Bernard Nietschmann, Between Land and Water: The Subsistence Ecology of the Miskito Indians, Eastern Nicaragua (New York: Seminar Press, 1973).

In the 1960s, a border dispute between Nicaragua and Honduras was decided in favour of Honduras. The World Court ruling resulted in some 40,000 Miskitos becoming indigenous to Honduras. Essentially the "artificial" border divided families whose movements back and forth between villages entailed crossing nation-state boundaries.[176] As well, the Miskitos who lived in Jinotega along the northern banks of the Río Coco suddenly became part of Honduras.

---

[174] Freeland, A Special Place, 30.

[175] Freeland, A Special Place, 30.

[176] Ortíz, "Indigenous Rights," 48.

These Miskitos were forced by the National Guard to abandon their villages now in Honduras and relocate to eight new villages on the Nicaraguan side. Today Jinotega is home to about 4,500 Miskitos and about 800 Sumu, about whom less is known. However, these villages are host to many stories of *trabil nani*.

These Miskitos and Sumus are socially, religiously and llinguistically different from their counterparts on the Atlantic Coast; many are Spanish-speaking Catholics.[177] They were more influenced by Mestizos and the Spanish than the British and United States. Second, there is less admixture culturally and racially. Third, with the rise of the FSLN in the 1960s, these villages experienced greater contact and repression from the National Guard and politically were more conscious of the struggles on the Pacific Coast. In fact, these Miskitos had contact with *Sandinistas*, including Tomas Borge, who sought food and guidance through the area. One Miskito Elder who was also a Catholic lay leader, Sandoval Fajardo, recalls the arrival to Walakitan of the National Guards: "about 80...arrived looking for the Sandinistas, who had already left. They stole food and animals from us and I was held prisoner for three days, accused of helping the Sandinistas."[178] During the *Contra*/revolution their villages were in the centre of *Contra* attacks originating from Honduras and they were again evacuated. However, in this relocation, the *Sandinistas* spent months discussing the possibility of relocation with the population and when it did occur in November 1982, it was consensual.

---

[177] Envío (June, 1989), 14-21.

[178] Envío (June, 1989), 15.

Somoza's ties with the United States strengthened on all fronts. The Kennedy Administration launched the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba from Puerto Cabezas and when it failed some of the Cubans relocated to the Atlantic Coast.[179] During this period, the United States' continent-wide program Alliance for Progress commenced shipment of charitable goods, and Creoles and Miskitos in particular were attracted to the style of clothing and food. This demand for food and goods from the United States further solidified the relationship between the Coast and the North Americans. However, with the end of the banana boom, the depletion of mahogany and timber forests, the severe reduction in fisheries and the reduction in gold and silver mines, the opportunity to involve the growing population of the Coast diminished. Further, by this time the lack of significant reinvestment of locally generated revenues was quite evident. Many *costeños* became accustomed to relying on handouts from North American Protestant charities such as Caritas, to whom they were grateful and remained loyal.[180] Ironically, this was interpreted as United States' generosity and the government's or "Spanish" indifference. Thus, in the Somoza years the *costeños* continued to lead virtually a separate existence from the rest of the largely Spanish-speaking country.

---

[179] Freeland, A Special Place, 11, 31.

[180] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 279.

Economic ties with the Pacific were preserved through Somoza's own companies which moved in to fill the vacuum left when the United States corporations pulled out. Essentially he too wanted to capitalize upon the Atlantic Coast's natural resources -- wood, gold, silver and fisheries (turtle, lobster, shrimp, fish). The politically astute Somoza, although a Catholic, also gave sizable donations to the Protestant churches and they, in turn, did not turn against him during the revolutionary period between the 1960s and 1979. His ability to communicate in English and also his good relations with investors were looked upon favourably on the Coast. The *Guardia*, which had a notorious reputation on the Pacific, was only mildly repressive on the Atlantic Coast, mostly content to secure some share of the profits. In the port towns, many of the Guardsmen and some *costeños* also were actively engaged in contraband.[181] This relationship continued through the revolutionary turmoil on the Pacific; the insurrections, strikes and armed conflicts generally did not encompass the Atlantic Coast. The "triumph," as it was known on the Pacific Coast, was seen on the Atlantic Coast as simply another change in government among the "Spanish." It did not have the same historic symbolism or significance.

---

[181] Mattelart, "Trabil Nani," 124-125.

VII.13. Ethnic Militancy: Revolution in the Revolution

Daniel Noveck was right when he claimed that it was problematic to reduce the *Sandinista* and indigenous peoples' conflict to a simplistic dialectic: there was a tendency to portray mostly the Miskitos as either helpless victims of *Sandinista* tyranny or as naive dupes in the CIA-backed *Contra* forces.[182] The indigenous peoples' reluctance to be incorporated into the revolutionary process was mis-read by the *Sandinistas* as counterrevolutionary or, minimally, as potentially counterrevolutionary. Philippe Bourgois noted that the realization of their mistake coupled with their cultural insensitivity came too late for Sandinista leaders. New to government and formal politics, and in the midst of war, they were forced to be somewhat reactionary in maintaining a military defense.[183] It has been shown that part of the military defense included some fairly arrogant moves by the *Sandinistas*, including forced relocation. While the end may have been justified, the means were to cast a long shadow over the *Sandinistas'* political, economic and social achievements and seriously tanished their image internationally.

---

[182] Noveck, "Class, Culture, and the Miskito Indians: A Historical Perspective," Dialectical Anthropology 13, 1 (1988), 17-29.

[183] Bourgois, "Nicaragua's Ethnic Minorities in the Revolution," Monthly Review 36, 8 (January, 1985), 22-44.

The irony of the *Sandinistas'* dream to liberate the indigenous peoples is that they had established no line of communication; there was no contact person or group, no network or solidarity. There were no contacts with Miskito, Creole or Sumu leaders who might have acted as authoritative intermediaries. In fact, William Ramírez, the political secretary for the FSLN in northern Zelaya claimed, "[W]e who arrived were people of the Pacific, unable to communicate with the population. We didn't know the language, and we also didn't know the customs, the characteristics, the way of life, the religious problems, the ethnic problems."[184] The political space for meaningful negotiations never materialized as the indigenous peoples soon found themselves and their demands caught in the cross fire between the *Contras* and the *Sandinistas*.

The events and the politics whereby some indigenous peoples resorted to arms against the *Sandinistas* were complicated. The indigenous peoples reflected a multiplicity of perspectives: sometimes the achilles heel of the *Sandinistas*, sometimes the pawns of the Reagan Administration, and sometimes they actually used the CIA to achieve their own ends. Further, many of the leaders who did resort to war wavered back and forth between armed aggression and negotiated settlement, between rejecting CIA money and assistance to independently asserting their autonomy from East-West struggles.

---

[184] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 279.

This was best exemplified by Rivera who collaborated with ARDE and eventually accepted the government's amnesty and agreement to negotiate the nature of a regional autonomy policy. The major point in establishing the context in which indigenous peoples became engaged in this conflict, is to emphasize that there is a profound difference between the claims of indigenous groups and the former *Somocista Contras*. Not only were these *Contra* groups distinctive because they were comprised of Nicaragua's indigenous peoples; they were different because many opposed the *Sandinistas* on some fairly distinctive reasons.

Some indigenous peoples collaborated with the *Contras* and received aid and training from the CIA, and in Bourgois' estimation, this United States support for the indigenous peoples' armed opposition only served to subvert the Revolution, prolong the state of war, and did not really resolve the indigenous demands for autonomy.[185] Some indigenous groups attempted to maintain an autonomous position and eventually became involved in national dialogues for reconciliation and autonomy. No doubt, many of the indigenous peoples, whether they remained in Nicaragua or Honduras, experienced a tremendous sense of alienation from their land, their cultures, and way of life from which they were rudely uprooted by the *Contra* war and the *Sandinista* relocations.

In 1982, Miskito leader Brooklyn Rivera observed that the

---

[185] Bourgois, "Nicaragua's Ethnic Minorities in the Revolution," 22-44; Jane Freeland, "Nationalist Revolution and Ethnic Rights: The Miskitú Indians of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast," Third World Quarterly, 11, 4 (October, 1989), 166-190.

indigenous struggle was being constructed in East-West terms. At that time he rejected this as antithetical to the Indian self-definition of "our own struggle" which was "not part of the East-West political conflict or some other non-Indian conflict."[186] He went on to say that it was important for Indians to make their own "case for Indian rights in our own behalf and without any alliance with Somocista or other counterrevolutionary forces." At that time, Rivera was fervently opposed to alliances with both the *Fuerzas Democraticas Nicaraguenses* (FDN), the principal *Contra* group and *Alianza Revolucionaria Democratica Ejército* (ARDE) led by former *Sandinista Commandante* Edén Pastora Gómez. As well, he objected to efforts by the Reagan Administration to speak on behalf of Indian rights by tying them to support for the *Contras*. Then, Rivera claimed that "[W]e strongly oppose those who would manipulate the Indian rights struggle for their own ends."[187] This apparent ideological purity was to change as Rivera joined first with the FDN, then ARDE and eventually accepted virtual bribes ranging from one hundred thousand to two and one-half million dollars from Oliver North not to participate in autonomy dialogues within Nicaragua.[188] This apparent corrupting of some armed Miskito leaders through substantial financial enticements or support (depending on point of view), made problematic some of their later claims of representing the authentic voice of indigenous peoples. Further, the perception of bribery and the implications of a possible "sell out" detracted attention from the historic occasion of carving out an autonomy law by Miskitos, Sumus, Ramas, Creoles and Garífunas within Nicaragua. It also partly accounted for the Sumu leaders' disassociation from some Miskito claims, despite affirming some shared historical experiences vis-a-vis stolen land.[189]

---

[186] Rivera, "Statement on Indian Rights" (April 1982) in Leiken and Rubin, eds., The Central American Crisis Reader, 256-258.

[187] Rivera, "Statement of Indian Rights," 257.

[188] North's aide Owen Nolan's testimony during Iran-Contra hearings in May, 1987, cited in "Chronology of Key Events on the Atlantic Coast, 1979-1989," Envío (April 1989), 30; and Freeland, A Special Place, 61-62, 92.

Rivera's idea of "our struggle" which encompassed Sumus and Ramas implied ethnic commonality and political consensus with Miskitos as well as among Miskitos themselves. This was a falsely constructed homogenization given the fragmentation between those who opted for armed struggle and those who chose negotiation. If there was political consensus among Miskitos prior to the outbreak of the *Contra*/revolution, it did not exist after. Some armed Miskito fighters -- sometimes represented as "warriors" in discourses which seek to emphasize the authenticity and "nobility" of the fighters' cause -- including Steadman Fagoth's group opted to align themselves with the *Somocista* forces, most notably the FDN in Honduras. Other armed factions such as Brooklyn Rivera's *Misurasata* strategically aligned themselves with the ARDE forces in Costa Rica.

---

[189] **For e.g. Sumu leader Dolores' claims of shared history but not a present shared political ideology, in Freeland, A Special Place, 50.**

Although no longer in unity with the *Sandinistas*, *Misurasata* maintained its name and established a *Contra* base of some 1,500 Indians in Costa Rica. According to its leader, Brooklyn Rivera, his group was interested in "justice for Indians, not the military defeat of the Sandinistas."[190]

In 1985 the CIA achieved a tenuous alliance between Fagoth's *Misura* and Rivera's *Misurasata* called *Kisan*. This alliance crumbled and Rivera went on to form *Asla*. *Kisan* continued under the command of Rivera. In 1987 the State Department sponsored another tenuous alliance called *Yatama* which included *Misura* and hardliners from *Misurasata* and *Kisan*.[191] In contrast to armed struggle some Miskitos opted for political negotiations toward autonomy under the leadership of women such as Hazel Lau and Dr. Myrna Cunningham. It was the indigenous women who took the initiatives toward amnesty, peace and reconciliation between the *Sandinistas* and *costeños*, and also promoted the idea of autonomy after men such as Steadman Fagoth, Diego Rivera and Uriel Vanegas resorted to arms.[192]

Miskito leaders such as Myrna Cunningham pointed to the

---

[190] Barry and Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, 279.

[191] Douglas Carcache, "The Atlantic Coast: Two Leaders' [Uriel Vanegas and Hazel Lau] Paths Rejoin," Envío 7, 87 (October, 1988), 20; "Chronology of Key Events," Envío, 8, 93 (April, 1989), 30, 31-43.

[192] Carcache, "The Atlantic Coast," 26-33; and Freeland, A Special Place, 57.

Sandinistas' creation of *caciques* as part of the initial problem of division. *Caciques* were first created by the *Sandinistas* to act as indigenous liaison-leaders to the national government. Ironically, these *caciques* became the principal leaders in the armed opposition. Cunningham described their alliances with *Somocista* forces as opportunistic and more in their individual interests as *caciques* than the collective interests of indigenous peoples. In her view, the creation of *caciques* such as Fagoth and Rivera, were not compatible with traditional indigenous ways of decision-making. These "externally" created/imposed roles allowed individual men to become divorced from the broader movement for indigenous rights through community consensus-building.[193] Such roles centred power in the individual, and in particular men, not the community. Ironically, the modern role of *cacique* was similar to that of the "Mosquito King" in the 1800's. Both were shaped in the image of European forms of leadership and representation. In this instance, Cunningham's "traditional" refers to non-European forms of representation.

Several symbolic events occurred in 1984. A Miskito woman, Dr. Myrna Cunningham, and two Creoles including Ray Hooker, were elected to the National Assembly under the FSLN banner in the 1984 election.[194] Further, in 1984 during a visit to Nicaragua, Rivera noted that the *Sandinistas* had made mistakes with the Indians, "but the situation was exploited by foreign forces to discredit the revolution and manipulate the Miskitos. We disagree with that because we are a people of peace."[195] In July 1984, in Miami, Rivera, Wycliffe Diego and a Creole representative Jenelee Hodgson, founded *Indianka Asla Nicaragua ra* which was interested in achieving autonomy through a non-violent, negotiated path. One faction of this group appeared to be synonymous with *Misura* and collaborated with counterrevolutionary armed opposition groups led by Fagoth in Honduras.

---

[193] Cunningham, "Afterword: 'Diversity within our Unity'," in Freeland, A Special Place, 107.

[194] "From Separatism to Autonomy--Ten Years on the Atlantic Coast," Envío 8, 93 (April, 1989), 40.

The *Miskitu Asla Takanka Nicaragua* (Organization of Miskitos in Nicaragua) or *Misatan* was founded on July 22, 1984 and sought to work within the Revolution as a means of attaining autonomy. The dialogue led to the establishment of the National Autonomy Commission on December 5, 1984, to draft statutes which would lead to the self-determination of indigenous peoples on the Atlantic Coast. The Commission was headed by Luis Carrion, Ray Hooker and Hazel Lau (from the initial *Misurasata*).[196] Similarly, the Sumu organization *Sumu Kalpapakna Wahaini Lani* or *Sukawala* was reactivated within Nicaragua in 1985 and became active in representing the interests of Sumus.[197] It had been founded in 1975 to act as a vehicle for the expression of Sumu political aspirations. The Sumu, Rama, Creole and Garifuna organizations and leaders carved out their own path which generally favoured negotiations toward autonomy. Most of the early visions, proposals and energy for autonomy came from Creole leaders such as Ray Hooker, Sumu Leaders such as Ronas Dolores, Rama leaders such as Rufino Omier and Miskito leaders such as Lau and Cunningham.[198] In Bluefields and Puerto Cabezas, diverse ethnic groups were formed in order to discuss the nature and the implications of autonomy. In effect, life on the Atlantic Coast was political in almost every sense of the word: organization, participation, inclusion, voice, and elections.

---

[195] Nicaraguan daily Barricada (8 November, 1984).

[196] Marcus, Nicaragua, The Sandinista People's Revolution, xviii.

VII.14. February 1990 Elections

The general complexity in military alliances and political strategies were reflected in the February 1990 election results. It should be recalled that when the *Sandinistas* were defeated by the UNO coalition, the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua had already negotiated an autonomy agreement which had been law for about three years. Apparently some parties within the UNO coalition had not favoured the agreement when it was instituted by the National Assembly.[199] Their outright opposition to autonomy, or indifference, continued after the election. In any event, there are now two autonomous regions, one in the northern Atlantic Coast area and the other in the southern area: Regions VII and VIII. The political affiliations on the Coast were split in quite a complex way between *Yatama*, UNO and the *Sandinistas*. Two 45-member Councils responsible for governing the autonomous zones in the south and north.[200] In each of the autonomous Councils, the *Sandinistas* held a minority position, the significance of which varied depending upon *Yatama's* decision to align with them or UNO. Depending on one's disposition toward the *Sandinistas*, this was either a good return given the volatile history of *Sandinista*-Miskito relations or it was a poor return and indicative of the indigenous peoples' rejection of the *Sandinistas* and the Revolution. The *Sandinistas* won 21 seats in the north and 18 in the south, though they only received between 10 to 20 per cent of the voting Miskito support. Thus most of the *Sandinistas'* support came from Creoles, Sumus, Ramas, Garífunas and especially Mestizos. The majority of the Miskito electorate backed *Yatama* candidates.

---

[197] Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity, 142.

[198] Omier, as did many Rama Indians, saw autonomy as a means of preserving cultural traditions and reviving those in danger such as language; Omier, himself spoke only Creole English and strongly promoted plans for bilingual or multilingual education; Freeland, A Special Place, 100.

In Region VII (the North Atlantic Autonomous Region), which has a large Miskito population, both UNO and the FSLN received one seat in the National Assembly. *Yatama* candidates ran under the banner of the Social Christian Party; they received one seat.[201] Seats to the Regional Autonomy Council were split: *Yatama* received 22, the FSLN received 21 and UNO received two; those who were voted into the National Assembly also had a seat in the Autonomy Council. UNO's two seats came from the Mestizo-dominated mining town Siuna. These results suggest that after the *Contra*/revolution, the *Sandinistas* were as popular as the *Yatama* representatives in Region VII.

---

[199] "The Election Results," Envío 9, 104 (March/April, 1990), 18.

[200] Hale, "Miskitú," 25.

The government of Region VII became led by Miskito leaders Leonel Pantín and Uriel Vanegas, both of whom returned to Nicaragua under the amnesty program.[202] Pantín and the *Sandinistas* had struck an accord allowing him to return in May, 1985. As a consequence some 9,000 inhabitants of the Río Coco were returned home from resettlement locations such as *Tasba Prí*.[203] Pantín, one of an increasing number of university-educated Miskitos, is regional "governor." Vanegas, a former commander of *Yatama*, occupies the role of Council president. Fagoth, formerly closely aligned with the CIA under Somoza, then the FDN, acts as advisor to Pantín on natural resources.[204] Fagoth is also a university educated Miskito who speaks several languages.

---

[201] "Election Data," Envío (March/April, 1990), 16, 17.

[202] Carache, "The Atlantic Coast," 19-33; "In from the Cold: An Ex-Contra [Lester Ponce] Speaks," Envío 6, 76 (Oct., 1987), 40-56.

[203] "From Separatism to Autonomy," Envío (April, 1989), 40.

[204] Hale, "Miskitú," 25, 45n3.

In Region VIII (South Atlantic Autonomous Region) the voting results were somewhat different: UNO received one seat in the National Assembly, as did the FSLN, and *Yatama* received none. In the Regional Autonomy Council, UNO received 23 seats, the FSLN received 18 and *Yatama* received 4 seats; the two National Assembly representatives also sits in the Council.[205] In Region VIII, Miskitos dominated the *Yatama* representatives. Many had aligned themselves with UNO. In the North they switched allegiance to *Yatama* only with its return to the area in September 1989.

In February 1990 when the *Sandinistas* were defeated by the UNO coalition, the peoples of the Atlantic Coast were alternately reflecting upon, celebrating and lamenting the results of their first elected autonomous government. Whether these varied allegiances benefitted the *costeños* to any significant extent remains to be seen.

This chapter has been a journey into history, not to recover and valorize past civilizations and peoples of indigenous and African "roots." Rather, I proffered an ethnohistorical, cultural, political and economic context for the future. In travelling back in time, to Spanish conquest of the Pacific Coast of Nicaragua and the British colonization of the Atlantic Coast, several stereotypes and ancient myths have been dispelled about "backward" and "inferior" peoples or the more innocuous, but equally unfounded, representation, of "noble savages."

---

[205] Envio (March/April, 1990), 16.

In sum, at least four general observations can be made about the contents of this chapter. First, the various indigenous or "Indian" groups and their counterparts of the African slave diaspora, living on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, have been the victims/survivors of European and North American brutality, racism and economic exploitation, but some were also the agents of inter/national "encounters," and economic and sociocultural "exchanges." Secondly, their divergent and shared experiences have been ones of resistance and struggle against both European power/domination and forced integration into the Nicaraguan nation-state governed, from their perspectives, by *Panias* or descendents of the Spaniards. In addition, however, I have shown that in the 1800s, partly as a consequence of power struggles between Britain and the Nicaraguan nation-state and, later, American capitalist investors, the *costeños* maintained a sophisticated form of government which drew upon African, indigenous and Anglo-Saxon conceptions of jurisprudence, land management, and political-economic structures. The "Miskito Reserve" government primarily was administered by Jamaicans of African descent and Creoles primarily from Jamaica, Belize and Nicaragua's own Atlantic Coast. In effect, *costeños*, indigenous and Africans of the diaspora, enjoyed the benefits of *klauna iwanka*. Knowledge of the latter should dispel the myth that the *costeños* slept through major historic conjunctures. To the contrary, they lived through and actively shaped history.

The final two comments are made in light of the insightful exchange between Bill Bigelow and Robert Schaffer. Of central concern to both were the significance of biological and environmental aspects of the imperialism and related institutions and practices, namely capitalism, Christianity and colonialization, but also the legacy of structurally unequal economic and material relations. Thus, despite the exercise of agency in colonial and inter/national encounters, and autonomy on the Miskito Reserve, the *costeños* were in a condition of systematically asymmetrical relations of power vis-a-vis Europeans, followed by the Nicaraguan nation-state, and since reincorporation, within the inter/national political and economic relations. In the post/colonial period, the latter were structured by American, British and Canadian mining, logging and fishing enterprises and, especially, the large banana plantations such as Standard Fruit. Fourth, these power/domination relations, which did not preclude individual and even collective acts of agency, were preserved through some 50 years of Somoza dictatorship; the dictator and *Somocistas* acquired the economic benefits of unequal relations of exchange. Finally, in this chapter, I showed that initial relations with the *Sandinista* revolutionary government, partly motivated by the latter's desire to "integrate" the *costeños* into the Nicaraguan nation-state, were confrontational and violent. However, *trabil nani* did produce the recording of indigenous languages, the right to education in the *lingua francas* of the Atlantic Coast (Miskito, Creole English) and, ultimately, *Klauna iwanka*. In effect, an indigenous revolution was born and nurtured *within* the Nicaraguan Revolution.

Chapter VIII

"Real" and "Imagined" Battlefield(s)

Traveler, there is no road,
We make the road as we walk,
The road is made as we walk,
and, looking back,
we see the path
we will never walk again.
Traveler, there is no road:
Only our wake in the sea.
Antonio Machado and Joan Manoel Serrat[1]
Sang in the mountains of Rosita (1987).

We have taken the first step,
and never will stop walking.
Ricardo Morales Aviles.
Sandinista martyr

From the perspective of policymakers such as Jeane Kirkpatrick, the "moderately repressive" Somozas were defensible; the *Sandinistas* were not. In an address to the United Nations Security Council in 1982, then Ambassador Kirkpatrick described the *Sandinistas* as emotional, irrational, and paranoid.[2] Given the dualistic thinking which shaped Kirkpatrick's worldview, no doubt she imagined Reagan's policymakers to be dispassionate, rational and, "naturally," mentally stable or "balanced." Kirkpatrick, centred her diagnosis of paranoia or, more dispassionately, her "evidence" in the

---

[1] Both this, and the quote to follow, are taken from C.M. Vilas, State, Class & Ethnicity in Nicaragua (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), xi-xii.

[2] Kirkpatrick, "A Paranoid Style of Politics," United Nations Security Council, (Provisional Verbatim Record of the 2,335 Meeting, March 25, 1982), in The Nicaraguan Reader: Documents of a Revolution

Sandinistas' "blame" of the United States for Nicaraguan experiences of economic and political destabilization. She saw this blame, and what she termed their "hostility," as a projection. In an interesting inversion, she denied that United States policymakers had any responsibility for Nicaraguan's internal political, economic and military crises and, further, claimed the *Sandinistas* were paranoid for thinking otherwise. According to her reasoning, Nicaragua's internal problems were solely *Sandinista*-caused and directly related to their Marxist ideology and choice to have foreign relations with the Soviet Union and Cuba.

In 1984, Reagan claimed that "[T]he Sandinista rule is a communist reign of terror."[3] In Reagan's view, the Nicaraguans were "trapped in a totalitarian dungeon" from which they could be "freed" by counterrevolutionary activities. Both Kirkpatrick and Reagan's assessments were homogenizing in that they assumed a sameness in the *Sandinistas* which was not evident prior to the Nicaraguan Revolution, and did not exist after the Revolution. The *Sandinistas* as personalities, as a party, as a movement, were conveniently reduced to caricatures in order to proffer an

---

Under Fire, ed., P. Rosset and J. Vandermeer (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1983), 14-20.

[3] Reagan, "U.S. Interests in Central America," Televised Address to the Nations, May 9, 1984, in Realism, Strength, Negotiation: Key Foreign Policy Statements of the Reagan Administration (Washington, D.C.: U.S. State Department, May, 1984), 134.

undifferentiated ideological mass of terror. This was a standard practice of Reagan policymakers. In addition to the *Sandinistas*, Nicaragua's indigenous and ethnic populations were homogenized and, in the process, what Miskito Dr. Myrna Cunningham called the "diversity within unity," was obscured. It produced what Trinh T. Minh-ha aptly named "planned hegemony." Similarly, drawing upon Irena Klepfisz and Jean-Paul Sartre's analyses of commodification of the holocaust and sterotypes of the Jew, respectively, I showed how Reagan policymakers replicated these practices in their construction of Jewish identities; the Jew in Reagan Administration discourse was constructed as a monolith.

Simplistic reductionism was a fundamental feature of psychological warfare, deployed as part of the contemporary doctrine of "low intensity warfare" developed by the United States military after its defeat in Indochina. The notion of "low intensity" of course referred to the experience for the country waging the war; the people who live and experience the consequences of so-called low intensity, would probably consider it "high intensity" or even simply "hot." The language, then, reflects the position of subject, that is, the instigator, not the "object" or those being acted upon. Colonel John D. Waghelstein, a leading low intensity warfare strategist and former head of the United States' military advisory team in El Salvador, suggested that low intensity war was adaptable to the particular context; it could be either "revolutionary" or "counterrevolutionary." Waghelstein stated that "[I]t is total war, including political, economic and psychological warfare, with the military aspect being a distant fourth in many cases."[4] This doctrine gained great significance in the Reagan era and was routinely deployed against the *Sandinistas*.

The centrality of this form of "total warfare," elements of which have been deconstructed throughout this study, was not lost on the *Sandinistas*, the *intended* objects. Arguably, the *Sandinistas'* power to voice their point of view, to articulate a difference, whether in various international forums, media, academic discourses, and the like, was not as great as that of the architects of the Reagan Administration's policies. Access to being heard also was limited and influenced the extent to which any student of politics who relied on the United States media, and especially the Reagan Administration, might be able to claim "knowledge" or even a cursory "understanding" of Nicaraguan political life. In fact, I have shown how much complexity, diversity and multilayered substantive experiences are obscured and simply lost in the dualistic thinking which characterized Western political thought (or as Nietzsche argued, Christian-moral thinking).

Peter Teeley, the press secretary for then Vice-president George Bush, added another element. Teeley's thinking was that "[Y]ou can say anything you want in a debate, and 80 million people hear it. If reporters then document that a candidate spoke untruthfully, so what? may be 200 people read it, or 2,000 or 20,000."[5] The lesson to be learned is that first impressions are lasting ones despite all the subsequent factual documentations and judicious rebuttals to the contrary. This is especially true when "first impressions" play off already existing ideological commitments; such impressions produce self-fulfilling images and consequences which, in turn, allow the continuation of what legitimately might be called "false consciousness." In this way, constructed "first impressions" can minimize political dissonance and at the same time, play into socio-cultural and structural relations which preserve power/dominance.

---

[4] **Waghelstein, "Post-Vietnam Counterinsurgency Doctrine," Military Review (May 1985), cited in W.I. Robinson and K. Norsworthy, "Nicaragua: The Strategy of Counterrevolution," Monthly Review 37, 7 (December 1985), 15.**

Jack Nelson, Reagan's media strategist, said that the ability to make use of first impressions was "part of their public relations genius" and the example he gave was Grenada. According to Nelson, "[T]here are still people who think that place [Grenada] was crawling with armed Cubans. It doesn't matter how often you go back and say that the fact is there were only 500 or 600 Cubans, that you got the truth out of Havana and lies out of Washington." Many people already were persuaded by "first impressions" and ironically later critical efforts were interpreted by neoconservatives as "revisionism" or "soft on communism."[6] As my deconstruction of various speeches and discourses revealed, the Reagan Administration strategists, public relations "geniuses," finely tuned this media ideology, perhaps more than any other Administration in the post/modern periods. With this media ideology finely tuned, policymakers made ample use of the "first impressions" effect during speeches to the nation, to special interest groups, and to international organizations. This was backed by the "big stick" approach of military warfare, economic sabotage, naval intimidation and by cultivating the "art of lying."

---

[5] Teeley, cited in New York Times (October 19, 1984).

[6] Mark Hertsgaard, "How Reagan Seduced Us," Village Voice (September 18, 1984), 17.

In one sense, the "real" war was the war of ideas. How this war was won or lost depended on one's ability to command the ear of men and women, and to persuade them. In this sense, the opposite of "real" was not Jean Baudrillard's multiplicity of images which produce "consensus truths," but rather, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's conception of "maufactured truths" which were produced to generate public consent. To the extent that the voices of the *Sandinistas* were not heard, their positions could not be understood and the probability of losing on this particular battlefield became virtually guaranteed. In fact, the "silenced" voices should call into question the saliency of notions like "consensus truths," especially across inter/national boundaries. In August 1985, Nicaragua's Minister of the Interior and only surviving *Sandinista* founder Tomas Borge, made this very claim. He argued that the "real" war was on the ideological battlefield; it was the war of words against Nicaragua and the *Sandinistas* which were slanderous, and constructed upon "dirty lies which poison."[7] In Borge's view, the war became the most worrisome to the *Sandinistas* because it was fought in the hearts and minds of men and women worldwide; the consequences, intended and unintended, could not be so readily ascertained as the more typical strategies and terrains of war. While he did not concede the moral highground nor did he reject the *Sandinista* path followed by his government, he did recognize that the United States had a much broader international context from which to launch its ideological assault and, hence, to "win" the war. This recognition brought to the fore the need to be heard, to have access to alternative perspectives and to engage in critical enquiry.

The number of policymakers, as well as the repetition of the same claims against the *Sandinistas* also led Nicaragua's Vice-president and renowned novelist Sergio Ramírez, to reflect upon, and to speak to the gravity of the ideological and psychological warfare. In deconstructing the politics and policies of the Reagan Administration toward Nicaragua, Ramírez used the analogy of "Frankenstein" because in his view, it aptly represented not only Reagan, but his multiple advisors as well. Thus, he suggested that Reagan-cum-the-Reagan Administration, was analagous to Frankenstein, "[N]ot in the perjorative sense--but, when you think of the Frankenstein legend, the monster was made up of the bodies and brains of different people, with horrible results."[8] Ramírez extended the analogy further by suggesting that there really were no "Reagan's policies" since Reagan had no mind independent of his advisors. Further, within "Reagan's mind" there wasn't any one person, rather what existed was a menagerie of "extremists who have dwelt in the academic and corporate catacombs, who have waited all these years to put their policies into effect."[9] These "extremists" were the ones responsible for creating the horrible conditions of ideological and psychological warfare in which the *Sandinistas* had to govern.

---

[7] **Nicaraguan daily, El Nuevo Diario (5 August 1985).**

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, the subject of much of this assault, was less inclined toward the metaphysical. In a 1987 interview, Ortega ursurped the Reagan Administration's categorization of the Soviet Union as the "evil empire," claiming that in fact, it was Reagan and his Administration's views which were godless and obscured by the Devil. Despite the repeated references to God and the religiosity with which the Reagan Administration pursued its interests, Ortega stated that from his perspective, "[I] don't think President Reagan has been illuminated by God. I think he's closer to the darkness of the Devil. But we hope the light arrives before he commits the insanity of invading Nicaragua."[10] The United States never did officially declare war on Nicaragua nor did it officially land forces on Nicaraguan soil, Eugene Hassenfus notwithstanding. In this respect, Borge and Waghelstein aptly captured the centrality of ideology and power in the hostilities which, for non-Nicaraguans and those who could physically escape the "butchery of the battlefield," primarily existed on the battlefield of ideas, and consisted less of bullets, and more of a war of words.

---

[8] Ramirez interview with Claudia Dreifus, Playboy (September 1983), cited in Al Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom: The United States in Nicaragua 1909-1988 (Rolling Bay, Washington: Sea Otter Press, 1988), 172.

[9] Ramirez quoted in Burke, Misery in the Name of Freedom, 172.

[10] Ortega, in "Daniel Ortega: a candid conversation with the

Much of the Reagan Administration's campaign of psychological warfare was about dis/illusioning the Nicaraguans. That is, the calculated, and perhaps sometimes unconscious, intent was to destroy the illusions of Nicaraguan self-determination independent of the United States and, simultaneously, to create a new illusion. The new illusion, or rather alternative to the *Sandinistas* and their visions for a new post-Somoza Nicaragua, although not specified, read "made in the USA" or simply "designed by the USA." The latter seems to fit in with George Shultz' desire to reproduce, throughout Latin America, the "foundation stones of American society." The bottom line was that Reagan was determined to destroy the *Sandinistas* and what he imagined they represented. This was straight power politics and as Robert Tucker put it:

> Although the sky will not fall if we do not "prevail" in Central America, our defeat there may well entail serious consequences for our broader security interests

---

President of Nicaragua about the contras, the revolution, baseball, poetry and why Reagan wants to destroy him," Playboy (November, 1987), 59.

> elsewhere...[what] is ultimately at stake in Central America; it is the credibility of United States power.[11]

Although the war in Nicaragua was "theirs," as Tucker termed it, the United States had to choose how it would respond. The choice first made by James Carter and then by an host of Reagan policymakers, was based on power/domination, not democracy, freedom or justice, despite the rhetoric. The United States was prepared to support any kind of regime, including reactionary tyrannies, dictatorships and the like, if they were "friends." In the words of John F. Kennedy, and repeated as farce by Shultz, they were interested in treating "a friend as a friend" and "a foe as a foe."

Indubitably, Reagan's virtual obsession with Nicaragua, and the cavalier dismissal of the *Sandinistas*, also was accompanied by naivete, cynicism and a fair bit of racism. According to one CIA official, "[I]t was hubris; we were going to knock off these little brown people on the cheap."[12] The cynics saw this as an inexpensive and ideal opportunity to accomplish simultaneously a number of goals. David MacMichael claimed there were "a few true believers in the government" who were convinced that the Soviet Union was behind everything and the cynics among them "thought they could win easily in Nicaragua and publicize this as a defeat of the evil empire."[13] Hubris aptly depicts Reagan's own words at a press conference on February 21, 1985 where he claimed his intent was to make the *Sandinistas* "cry Uncle."[14]

---

[11] Tucker, "Their Wars, Our Choices," New Republic (October 24, 1983).

[12] The Washington Post (December 16, 1984).

In order to accomplish this conquest of "little brown people" and destroy "the evil empire," the Reagan Administration launched a propaganda campaign of such a magnitude that most efforts to keep track were exercises in futility. On the battlefield of ideas, the lines between the real and the imagined were perpetually blurred. As one Los Angeles Times editorial put it, "[Reagan's foreign policy] manifests a regression to a simplistic anti-communism that is counterproductive because it fails to distinguish between real and imagined threats to national security."[15] The Administration's case which depicted Nicaragua as a genuine threat to United States national security was of dubious worth, unless that threat was understood in terms of an idea, an example. Indubitably, from the worldview of Reagan policymakers, a self-defining, self-determining Central American republic would have set a dangerous precedent if, as in this case, Nicaragua had succeeded in charting its own course, independent of United States' interests. In material terms, Nicaragua was no threat to the United States although the Reagan Administration sought to construe it as such; it was more likely that

---

[13] MacMichael, May 1986, cited in R. Matthews, "The CIA's War," NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August, 1986), 23.

[14] Reagan, cited in Eich and Rincón, The Contras: Interviews with Anti-Sandinistas (San Francisco: Synthesis Publications, 1985), 111; also E. Bradford Burns, At War in Nicaragua: The Reagan Doctrine and the Politics of Nostalgia, 1987), 26.

[15] Los Angeles Times (January 23, 1986).

Nicaragua was a dangerous threat as an idea, as an alternative to United States hegemony. Nicaragua was dangerous because if it had succeeded, it would have provided the seeds from which other oppressed peoples might have sought a different, more self-defining path. This would jeopardize the United States' ability to dominate or exercise power over such peoples. In ideological terms, then, Nicaragua was a kind of threat to the "giant," although in material terms this was hardly the case.

This "absolute" fixation led Reagan and his Administration to make the most deceitful claims. Those less cynical might suggest that if Reagan genuinely believed in his heart and in his head that he was telling "the truth" then, in St. Augustine's view, he was not lying, since lying is having one thing in your heart and another in your head. However, the hubris associated with wanting to make the *Sandinistas* "cry Uncle" and of "knocking off brown people" suggest something other than a quest for the "truth" or, minimally, other than lies. In "By Hate Possessed," Anthony Lewis wrote that "[W]hen he spoke to the nation...urging military aid to the contras, his misstatements of fact were so flagrant that they troubled even those inured to Reagan's fantasies."[16] The "misstatements," "fabrications" or simply "lies," were deliberate, with the cynical intent of selling the Congress, the United States citizens, and the international community on Reagan's obsessive approach to Nicaragua.

---

[16] Anthony Lewis, "By Hate Possessed," New York Times (March 24, 1986).

There was also hubris, perhaps combined with the fantasy of saving the world from the evil empire, evident in the Reagan Administration's actions; the "good guys" were going to win just like in the movies. According to Reagan's campaign strategists for the 1984 election against Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro, "*[P]aint RR as the personification of all that is right with, or heroized by, America...where a vote against Reagan is, in some subliminal sense, a vote against a mythic 'America'*" [original emphasis].[17] The strategy was to construct an image of a mythic America that Reagan would personify by "standing tall" and defeating the "wimp" Mondale in the same way he defeated the other Democrat "wimp" Carter. Perhaps the myth became the reality for Reagan.

Reagan himself was living in an altered reality, a "mythic America" constructed upon imagination, dreams and non-material facts. This suggests that "fact" was not the operable domain. Thus to a significant extent the "real" world became the world constructed by Reagan's campaign and foreign policymakers. Those who proffered factual analytic and evaluative perspectives to challenge the misstatements, who proffered systemic and systematic critiques of the policies toward Nicaragua, found themselves fighting what might have appeared like the wrong battle. Perhaps former *Contra* leader Edgar Chamorro summed up best the Reagan Administration's policies and the resulting nihilism they spawned. As Chamorro claimed of Reagan's policies toward Nicaragua, "[T]his is like a Kafka world. You can manipulate people to the extreme, but there is no truth or reality around you. Or reality is irrelevant. Someone to whom you have no access makes the decisions, unseen."[18] The "real" world became/was the mythic world. The idea of "truth" was reduced to just another manipulated variable; if the Reagan Administration's version succeeded, then it was cynically claimed that "truth" had won the day.

---

[17] Reagan Campaign Strategy memo, June 1984, cited in N. Sklar, Reagan, Trilateralism and Neoliberals: Containment and Intervention in the 1980s (Boston: South End Press, 1986), 1.

It was truly in a realm of hyper-reality that the intelligence and covert activities, and the rigourous debate they birthed then and since, occurred. These debates, many of which were analyzed throughout this study, act as a necessary backdrop to understanding how the *Contra*/revolution started and continued for a decade. The intent was there from 1978 to cultivate a more conservative alternative to the *Sandinistas*. While it might seem almost a cliché at this point, these facts, events and discourses suggest that Carter's response to revolution in Nicaragua was a historical continuation of the United States' response to other radical governments in Latin America. In the words of Marx, paraphrasing Hegel, it was history repeating itself, historical agents denying the rational and reflective ability to "learn" from the past and to act with historical consciousness and a conscience in constructing the future. This was a repetition of Dwight Eisenhower's (1953-61) response to Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954 and Richard Nixon's (1969-74) response to Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973.[19] In both cases, the United States reacted by authorizing the CIA to finance and direct *coups d'etat* against governments whose radical (popularly supported) rhetoric, concrete actions for social justice, and economic redistribution, were perceived as contrary to the United States' interest in preserving the prevailing order of things, the status quo of systematically asymmetrical relations of power. Thus, it was both by design and chance that an alliance developed between the *Somocistas* -- who wanted a return to the past order -- and the United States immediately after Somoza's defeat.

---

[18] Chamorro, interview with Christopher Dickey in May, 1983, quoted in Dickey, With the Contras (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 270.

No doubt, the ideological warfare was inflamed by the inter/national context of the "Cold" War and the existence of bipolar worldviews, which essentially denied full sovereignty to any small nation, particularly those deemed to be in certain "spheres of influence." The ideas Carter and Reagan espoused merely reflected the prevailing ideas espoused by previous Administrations toward Central American revolutionary movements. These ideas were partly influenced by history and partly influenced by the heightened ideological rhetoric of Carter and Reagan as they prepared for the November 1980 presidential elections, and sustained by Reagan after the election. The ideas also represent the contemporary cynicism of United States foreign policymakers and the creative imagination of the architects of psychological warfare. And, perhaps most tragically, the ideas reflect the denial of human learning and an unnecessary rejection of reason and reasonableness in history.

---

[19] Roger Burbach, "Revolution and Reaction: U.S. Policy in Central America," Monthly Review 36, 2 (June 1984), 1-20; James Petras, "U.S. Foreign Policy: The Revival of Interventionism," Monthly Review 31, 9 (February 1980), 15-27.

To varying degrees, both Carter and Reagan felt the national security interests of the United States justified some level of interference in Nicaraguan politics. Neither president challenged the prevailing sentiment of United States interventionism. Neither seriously pondered the idea of an autonomous Nicaragua, a self-determining nation in Central America. Although Carter's foreign policy was often constructed as "reluctant," and Reagan's as uncompromising dogma, the fact is that both postures resulted in direct and indirect intervention. Up to the time of his 1980 election defeat, Carter's interventions were primarily directed at creating and supporting a more conservative opposition to Somoza than the *Sandinistas.*[20] There apparently was no paramilitary component to Carter's opposition to the *Sandinistas*, although in principle, military intervention was implicit in Carter's push for a "peace-keeping force" for post-Somoza Nicaragua. This rightly was rejected by the Organization of American States as unnecessary interference. No doubt the recommendation of such a force was intended to hold at bay the final *Sandinista* military triumph.

---

[20] **Joseph Lelyveld, "The Director: Running the C.I.A.," The New York Time Magazine (January 20, 1985), 25.**

In effect, it was intended to deny the autonomy of Nicaraguan citizens and, in at least this case, the objection by Latin American leaders temporarily prevailed. As Mexico defended, it was up to the Nicaraguans to shape "their" Revolution.

Cultivating or "manufacturing" an alternative to the *Sandinistas* was as much an objective of the Carter Administration as it was for the Reagan Administration except that Reagan's policy extended to involvement in creating first an armed opposition, and then a unified political-military opposition. Whether Carter would have resorted to the same had he won in November 1980 is open to speculation. However there is much evidence which seems to point in that direction. Reluctant as they may have been, Carter's policies provided the initial seed for counterrevolutionary efforts to turn back the tide of the *Sandinista* succession to power. In this respect, both Administrations were directly and indirectly involved in the creation of the armed forces which operated against the *Sandinista* government between 1979 and 1990.

It would be unnecessarily reductionist, however, to say that foreign policy, particularly as it related to the armed *Contra* opposition to the *Sandinistas* was influenced exclusively by external actors or what had been done in the past. In part, particular foreign policy actions were a consequence of the personalities involved, as well as the independent events as they unfolded. This was as true of the United States foreign policymakers as it was of those within Nicaragua. Not all the events within

Nicaragua were imagined or manufactured; some resulted from actual political, religious and cultural differences although they never received as much critical attention. I have shown this to be the case with my discussions of the construction of religious (Jewish) and ethnic identities in Chapters V through VII. The last two chapters, in particular, represent my efforts to reflect upon the texture of knowledges, experiences and thinking, that were obscured and even lost within the dominant discourses, and the unfolding tragedies of the *Contra*/revolution.

In the midst of this, the *Sandinista* government, and a host of other inter/national dissenters, tried to reiterate to the world that theirs was a policy in keeping with Nicaragua's sovereign integrity, the right to non-alignment or at least multilateral alignment, and the right of self-determination. That some *Sandinista* members and government officials were anti-United States was evident in their rhetoric, but this was clearly an understandable, and even morally justifiable, response to United States-supported tyranny, what Kirkpatrick called "autocracy." To acknowledge the legitimacy of anti-United States sentiments was, in part, to validate the very "real" and experiential bases of those sentiments.

The Reagan Administration, in particular, would not accept that their East-West script was an illusion. The illusion did not accurately reflect the complexity, the nuanced and multilayered texture of what Miguel D'Escoto called the "Nicaraguan canvas." The unacknowledged error was also in not recognizing the differently situated psychological and political commitments of Nicaraguans; the error was in thinking there had to be an either/or. Posing the Nicaraguan struggles in polar or Cold War terms denied the Nicaraguans a legitimacy independent of the United States and the Soviet Union. Thus, for the Carter Administration, followed by the Reagan Administration, as long as there were those who looked upon the Soviet Union or Cuba favourably, this hemisphere was in danger of "another Cuba."

In one sense, the preoccupation with preventing "another" Cuba presupposed an understanding of the already existing "Cuba." It presupposed that some homogeneous social formation called Cuba could be commodified, exported and superimposed upon other, and different, Latin American states such as the Dominican Republic, Grenada and Nicaragua. If Cuba represented non-conformity, a disruption in the status quo, then understandably, for a reactionary, for those seeking to preserve asymmetrical relations of power/domination, Cuba-as-symbol *par excellence* needed to be destroyed. The psyche of Cold War hawks depended on maintaining the dualistic representations which denied equality and autonomy to the "other" side of the duality. The preoccupation with Cuba had historic, political, economic and psychological significance. Understood in terms espoused by Kennan, Kirkpatrick, Abrams, Shultz and others, to be likened to Cuba was to be a state which did not show proper loyalty to the United States; it was to be as Melos was to Athens.

This meant a state which was not "friendly" and did not know how to preserve the balance of power. It meant a state which had to be destroyed. This East-West ideological script, what I have called either a con/text or pre/text, was an inseparable aspect of the United States foreign policy program to support the armed groups opposed to the *Sandinista* government in Nicaragua.

In summation, this study has explored, from varied perspectives, the ideas and ideologies, their calculated and unconscious intentions and consequences, which were the foundation of the *Contra*/revolution. The dominant discourses and dialectics, those between the Reagan Administration and the *Sandinista* government, cast only one light on the nature and meaning of counterrevolutions generally and the Nicaraguan *Contra*/revolution specifically. Various doctrines, dualistically conceived, and which gave birth to either/or relations wherein some are dominant, others subordinate; some privileged, others deprived; some heard, others silenced, have existed since the advent of Christianity, capitalism and colonization in Columbus' "other world," this our "New World." What was/is not "new" was/is the systematically asymmetrical relations of power which disadvantaged and excluded from sharing power states such as Nicaragua, religious groups such as Jews, and indigenous and ethnic populations such as Nicaragua's Sumus, Ramas, Miskitos, Garífunas, Creoles and Mestizos. All those who were the unequal side of the duality, not coincidentally, were caricatured, sterotyped, mythologized and hence obscured. My interrogations of these relations represent my offerings (perhaps "dreams") for the future, not so much to resurrect the past as Hegel, Marx and Fanon all cautioned against, but to provide insights and elements of political and historic consciousness which can allow those who dare, to exist with greater justice in the future.

Selected Bibliography

Abrams, E. "The Silence in Nicaragua," The Washington Post (22 August 1982).

Acharya, A. "The Reagan Doctrine and International Security," Monthly Review 38, 10 (March 1987).

Adorno, J.W. Negative Dialectics, trans. Ashton, E.B. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

Aguilar, L. (ed.) Marxism in Latin America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968).

Aiken, D. The Age of Ideology (New York: New American Library, 1956).

Alaton, S. "Expulsion of the Jews," Globe and Mail (1 August 1992).

Albury, P. The Story of the Bahamas (London: Macmillan, 1975).

Alcoff, L. "Cultural Feminism Versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory," Signs 13, 3, 1988.

Alfredsson, Gunmunder. "International Law, international organizations and indigenous peoples," Journal of International Affairs 26 (Spring-Summer, 1982).

Allen, E.L. From Plato to Nietszche (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Premier Book, 1957).

Allison, D. "Destruction/Deconstruction in the Text of Nietzsche," Boundary 2, 8, 1979.

Althusser, L. For Marx (New York: Random, 1970).

Amanecida Collective, The. Revolutionary Forgiveness: Feminist Reflections on Nicaragua (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987).

Ambrose, S. Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy, 1938-1980 (New York: Penguin, 1980).

Americas Watch. Human Rights in Nicaragua: Reagan Rhetoric and Reality (New York: AW, 1985).

Americas Watch. Failure: The Reagan Administration's Human Rights Policy in 1983 (New York: AW and Helsinki Watch Committee, 1983).

Americas Watch. Human Rights in Guatemala: No Neutrals Allowed (New York: AW, 1982).

Americas Watch. Report on Human Rights in El Salvador (New York: Vintage Books, 1982).

Americas Watch and Brown, C.S. Supplement to the Report on Human Rights in El Salvador (New York: Americas Watch and Civil Liberties Union, July 20, 1982).

Amnesty International. Women in the Front Line: An Amnesty International Report (New York: AI, March, 1991).

Amin, S. "1492," Monthly Review 44, 3, 1992.

Anderson, T. Matanza (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1971).

Anderson, T. The War of the Dispossessed: Honduras and El Salvador, 1969 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1981).

Angelou, M. "On the Pulse of Morning," Guardian Weekly (31 January 1993).

Associated Press. "Israel-Contras Link Goes Back Years, According to Israeli," San Francisco Chronicle (5 December 1986).

Arens, W. The Man Eating Myth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

Arias, P. Nicaragua: Revolución, Relatos de Combatientes del Frente Sandinista (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1981).

Arlovi, F. "Carta al Rey sobre exterminio de los Mosquitos" (Granada, 30 November 1711) in de Peralta, M. Costa Rica y Costa de Mosquitos (Paris [no pub.], 1898).

Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus. "Who Aid the Contras?: An Analysis of the Nature of the Private American Groups Providing Them Financial and Material Support," Congressional Record-House (23 April 1985).

Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus. "Contra Military Leadership Still Somoza Officers," Congressional Record-Senate, (19 March 1986).

Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus. "Who Are the Contras?: An Analysis of the Make-up of the Military Leadership of the Rebel Forces," Congressional Record-House, (23 April 1985).

Armstrong, R. "Containment and the Third World," NACLA Report on the Americas XVII, 6, 1983.

Armstrong, R. "The World in a Funhouse Mirror," NACLA Report on the Americas, XVII, 6, 1983.

Armstrong, R. "Visions of America," NACLA Report on the Americas, XVII, 6, 1983.

Arthur, C.J. (ed.) The Germany Ideology 1845-6 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970).

Asad, T. Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter (New York: Humanities Press, 1972).

Asad, T. "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Anthropology," in Writing Culture, (ed.), Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

Ashcroft, W.D., Griffins, G., and Tiffin, H. The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice of Post-colonial Literature (London: Routledge, 1989).

Atkinson, B. (ed.) Walden and Other Writings of Henry David Thoreau (New York: [Random House] Modern Library, 1937).

Atwood, M. Handmaid's Tale (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1985).

Autonomy Commission. "Principles and Policies for the Exercise of the Right to Autonomy," Autonomy (Managua, 1985).

Avineri, S. (ed.) Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization (New York: Anchor Books, 1969).

Bahbah, B. Israel and Latin America, The Military Connection (New York: St. Martin's Press and the Institute for Palestinian Studies [Washington], 1986).

Barak, Z. "U.S. Demands Israeli Aid to Destabilize the Regime in Nicaragua," Yediot Aharonot (22 April 1984).

Barry, T. and Preusch, D. The Central American Fact Book (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1986).

Basu, S. and Gupta, A. "Germany: Rise of a Fourth Reich," Spare Rib, 238, 1992.

Baudéz, C.F. Central America (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970).

Baudrillard, J. "La guerre du Golfe n'a pas eu lieu," Liberation (29 March 1991).

Baudrillard, J. "The Reality Gulf," The Guardian (11 January 1992).

Beckland, L. "Sandinistas Are Anti-Semitic, Group Charges," Los Angeles Times (14 March 1985).

Bell, C. "Remarks on the Mosquito Territory, its Climate, People, Productions, &c, &c; with a Map," Royal Geographic Society Journal 32, 1862.

Bell, D. The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting (New York: Basic Books [1973] 1976).

Bell, D. The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties (New York: The Free Press [1960] 1962).

Belli, G. From Eve's Rib, trans. White, S.F. (Willimantic, Conn.: Curbstone Press, 1989).

Ben-Ami, A. "U.S., Israel involved in Angolan arms affair, too," Jerusalem Post (9 December 1986).

Benhabib, S. and Cornell, D. (eds.) Feminism as Critique (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

Berger, J. "Nicaragua's Jews: Wide Disagreement on Status," New York Times (20 April 1986).

Bermann, K. Under the Big Stick: Nicaragua and the United States Since 1848 (Boston: South End Press, 1986).

Bhabha, H. "Interrogating Identity: The Postcolonial Prerogative" in Goldberg, D.T. (ed.) Anatomy of Racism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

Bigelow, B. "A Response to Robert Shaffer," Monthly Review 44, 7, 1992.

Bigelow, B. "Two Myths Are Not Better Then One," Monthly Review 44, 3, 1992.

Black, G. "Taking Note," NACLA Report on the Americas (June, 1986).

Black, G. Triumph of the People (London: Zed Press, 1981).

Bloch, J. "Israel's new openings in Africa," The Middle East (January 1985).

Bloch, J. "Israelis 'aiding MNR rebels,'" African Analysis (London, 28 November 1986).

Booth, J. "A Guatemalan Nightmare: Levels of Political Violence, 1966-1972," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 22, 1980.

Booth, J. and Seligson. M.M. Elections and Democracy in Central America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

Booth, J. and Walker, T. Understanding Central America (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989).

Borge, T. Women and the Nicaraguan Revolution (New York: Pathfinder, 1982).

Borge, T., Fonseca, C., Ortega, D., Ortega, H. and Wheelock, J. Sandinistas Speak (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1982).

Boudon, R. The Analysis of Ideology, trans. Slater, M. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Bourgois, P. "Nicaragua's Ethnic Minorities in the Revolution," Monthly Review 36, 8, 1985.

Bourgois, P. "Class, Ethnicity, and the State among the Miskitu Amerindians of Northeastern Nicaragua," Latin American Perspectives 29 (Spring, 1981).

Bowen, G. "The Origin of State Terrorism," in Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean, (eds.) Shultz, D. and Graham, D. (Boulder: Westview, 1984).

Bracher, K. The Age of Ideologies: A History of Political Thought in the Twentieth Century, trans. Osers, E. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982).

Bradlee, B. Jr. "Ex-agent says U.S. shielded 4 tied to Contras," Boston Globe (25 January 1987).

Brecher, J., Walcott, J. Martin, D. and Nissen, B. "A Secret War for Nicaragua," Newsweek (8 November 1982).

Brinton, D.G. The American Race (New York: N.D.C. Hodges, 1891).

Brinton, D.G. "The Matagalpan Linguistic Stock of Central America," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 34, 1895.

Brody, R. Contra Terror in Nicaragua, Report of a Fact-finding Mission (Boston: South End Press, 1985).

Brooke, J. "CIA said to Send Rebels in Angola Weapons via Zaire," New York Times (1 February 1987).

Brown, G. "Miskito Revindication: Between Revolution and Resistance," in Nicaragua: A Revolution Under Siege, (eds.) Harris, R. and Vilas, C. (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986).

Brumberg, A. "Reagan's Untruths About Managua," New York Times (18 June 1985).

Brzezinski, Z. Between Two Ages (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971).

Buckmaster, H. The Seminole Wars (New York: Collier Books, 1966).

Bukharin, N. Historical Materialism (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, [1921] 1926).

Bunyan, M. Transcripts of U.S. Covert Operations against Nicaragua: a public forum (Washington, D.C. Campaign for Political Rights and American Civil Liberties Union, 1982).

Burbach, R. "Revolution and Reaction: U.S. Policy in Central America," Monthly Review 36, 2 (June 1984).

Burke, A. Misery in the Name of Freedom: The United States in Nicaragua 1909-1988 (Rolling Bay, Washington: Sea Otter Press, 1988).

Burker, E. "Should Feminism Appropriate Postmodernism?" Women/Politics, Newsletter of the Organized Section for Women and Politics Research 4, 1, 1992.

Burns, E. A Handbook of Marxism (New York: International Publishers, 1935).

Burns, E.B. At War in Nicaragua: The Reagan Doctrine and the Politics of Nostalgia (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).

Burnstein, J.N. "Ethnic Minorities and the Sandinista government," Journal of International Affairs 36 (Spring-Summer, 1982).

Cabezas, O. Fire From the Mountain: The Making of a Sandinista, trans. Weaver, K. (Scarborough, Ont.: New American Library, 1985).

Callanicos, A. Against Postmodernism: a Marxist Critique (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

Camus, A. Resistance, Rebellion, and Death , trans. O'Brien, J. (New

York: Vintage Books, 1966).

Camus, A. The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt, trans. Bower, A. (New York: Vintage Books, 1956).

Carcache, D. "The Atlantic Coast: Two Leaders' [Uriel Vanegas and Hazel Lau] Paths Rejoin," Envío 7, 87, 1988.

Carew, J. Fulcrums of Change: Origins of Racism in the Americas and other Essays (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1988).

Carew, J. "United We Stand! Joint Struggles of Native Americans and African Americans in the Columbian Era," Monthly Review 44, 3, 1992.

Carter, E.H., Digby, G.W., and Murray, R.N. History of the West Indian Peoples (London: Nelson, 1971).

Cartey, W. and Kilson, M. The African Reader: Colonial Africa (New York: Vintage Books, 1970).

Castro, F. Nothing Can Stop the Course of History, Interviews by Elliot, J. and Dymally, M. (New York: Pathfinder, 1986).

Cavalanti, P. and Picchon, P. (eds.) History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci (Saint Louis: Telos Press, 1975).

Central American Historical Institute. "The Election Results," Envío 9, 104, 1990.

Central American Historical Institute. "Chronology of Key Events on the Atlantic Coast, 1979 1989," Envío, 8, 95, 1989.

Central American Historical Institute. "From Separatism to Autonomy--Ten Years on the Atlantic Coast," Envío 8, 93, 1989.

Central American Historical Institute. "The Atlantic Coast--Peace Has Taken Hold," Envío 7, 83, 1988.

Central American Historical Institute. "Becoming Visible: Women In Nicaragua," Envío 6, 78, 1987.

Central American Historical Institute. "Church-State Relations: A Chronology, Part I," Envío 6, 77, 1987.

Central American Historical Institute. "In from the Cold: An Ex-Contra [Lester Ponce] Speaks," Envío 6, 76, 1987.

Cesaire, A. Discours sur le colonialisme (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1956).

Chambers, B. (ed.) Chronicles of Black Protest (Scarborough: New American Library, 1968).

Chamorro, P. La Reincorporación de la Mosquitia (Granada, no pub., 1944).

Chomsky, N. Deterring Democracy (New York: Hill and Wang, 1991).

Chomsky, N. Language and Politics, (ed.) Otero, C.P. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988).

Chomsky, N. On Power and Ideology: The Managua Lectures (Boston: South End Press, 1987).

Chomsky, N. The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel & the Palestinians (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1983).

Chomsky, N. Turning the Tide: The U.S. and Latin America (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987).

Church, G., Gorey, H. and Seaman, B. "But What Laws Were Broken?," Time (1 June 1987).

Clarence, R.H. "To Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, Queen of Great Britian and Ireland, and Empress of India," Confidential Print 6547 (January-June, 1894) in von Oertzen, E., Rossbach, L. and Wünderich, V. (eds.) The Nicaraguan Mosquitia in Historical Documents 1844-1927 (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1990).

Claridge, W.W. A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti (London: F. Cass, [1915], 1964).

Clark, A. Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Clark, M. "Deconstructing The Birth of Tragedy," International Studies in Philosophy 19, 1987.

Clifford, J. and Marcus, G.E. (eds.) Writing Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

Clifford, J. The Predicament of Culture (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

Cockburn, A. "Press Clips," Village Voice (30 March, 1982).

Cockburn, L. "Drugs, Guns and the CIA," a Frontline documentary produced by the Public Broadcasting Corporation, 1988.

Cody, E. "Managua Jews Reject Anti-Semitism Charge," Washington Post (29 August 1983).

Cohen, J. and Rodgers, J. "Knowledge, Morality and Hope: the social thought of Noam Chomsky," New Left Review 187, 1991.

Collins, J. Nicaragua, What Difference Could a Revolution Make?: Food and Farming in the New Nicaragua, 3rd edn. (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1986).

Comisión Nacional de Promoción y Protección de los Derechos Humanos. "Resultados de una investigación que la comisión nacional...en relación a un communicado de la ’Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B’Nai B’rith’ sobre una supesta persecución a la comunidad judía en Nicaragua," (Managua, 1983).

Conrad, J. Heart of Darkness and The Secret Sharer (Toronto: Bantam Books [1902], 1969).

Conzemius, E. Ethnographical Survey of the Miskito and Sumu Indians of Honduras and Nicaragua (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 106).

Conzemuis, E. "Notes on the Miskito and Sumu Languages of Eastern Nicaragua and Honduras," International Journal of American Linguistics 5, 1929.

Cook, B. The DeClassified Eisenhower: A Divided Legacy of Peace and Political Warfare (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981).

Crosby, A. Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Crosby, A. The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1972).

Cuandernos del Tercer Mundo. Gria del Tercer Mundo 1980 (Lima, Peru: DESCO, 1980).

Cunningham, M. "Afterword: ‘Diversity within our Unity’," in Freeland, J. A Special Place in History: The Atlantic Coast in the Nicaraguan Revolution (London: Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, 1988).

Darwin, C. Origin of Species (London: J. Murray [1859], 1880).

Davidson, B. "Columbus: the Bones and Blood of Racism," Race & Class 33, 3, 1992.

Davidson, W.V. "The Garífuna of Pearl Lagoon: Ethnohistory of an Afro-American Enclave in Nicaragua," *Ethnohistory* 27, 1, 1980.

Davidson, W.V. "Black Carib habitats in Central America," in Helms, M. and Loveland, R.O. (eds.) *Frontier Adaptations in Lower Central America* (Philadelphia: ISHI, 1976).

Davis, A. *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983).

Davis, W. (ed.) *Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1946).

de Alcedo, A. *Dicionario geografico-historíco de las Indias Occidentales ò America* (Madrid: Manuel Gonzaléz, 1786-89).

de Lauretis, T. *Alice Doesn't* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

de Man, P. *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language In Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

Debayle, A. *Nicaragua Betrayed* (Boston: Western Islands, 1980).

Deighton, J., Horsley, R., Stewart, S. and Cain, C. *Sweet Ramparts: Women in Revolutionary Nicaragua* (London: Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, 1983).

del Olmo, F. "In Guatemala, Fusiles y Frijoles," *Los Angeles Times* (11 February 1983).

Dennis, P. and Olien, M. "Kingship among the Miskito," *American Ethnologist* 11, 1984.

Dennis, P. "The Costenos and the Revolution in Nicaragua," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 23, 3, 1981.

Derrida, J. *Limited Inc*, 2nd edn. (Evanston, III.: Northwestern University, 1989).

Derrida, J. *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Harlow, B. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

Descartes, R. *Discourse on the Method and Meditation on First Philosophy*, trans. Cress, D. (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co., 1980).

Descartes, R. *Discourse on the Method*, trans. Lafleur, L.J. (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1951).

Díaz-Polanco, H. "Neoindigenismo and the Ethnic Question in Central America," trans. Swarthout, K., Latin American Perspectives, 52, 14, 1, 1987.

Dickey, C. With the Contras (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).

Dietrich, B. Somoza and the Legacy of U.S. Involvement in Central America (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981).

Dillon, S. Commandos: The CIA and Nicaragua's Contra Rebels (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1991).

Dixon, M. and McCaughan, E. "The Suez Syndrome: U.S. Imperialism in Decline," Contemporary Marxism 8, 1984.

Doane, J. and Hodges, D. Nostalgia And Sexual Difference: The Resistance to Contemporary Feminism (New York: Methuen, 1987).

Donner, F. The Un-Americans (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1961).

Dookhan, I. The United States in the Caribbean (London: Collins Caribbean, 1985).

Dorfman, A. The Empire's Old Clothes: What the Lone Ranger, Babar, and Other Innocent Heroes do to Our Minds (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

Dougherty, J. and Pfaltzgraff, L. Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey, 2nd edn. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981).

Dozier, C.L. Nicaragua's Mosquito Shore: The Years of British and American Presence (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1985).

Ducher, M., Esq. Nicaragua: Violations of the Laws of War by Both Sides (Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America, February-December, 1985).

Dwyer, K. Moroccan Dialogues (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1982).

Eagleton, T. Literary Theory: An Introduction (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

Easton, L. and Guddat, K. (eds.) Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy (New York: Anchor Books, 1967).

Eich, D. and Rincón, C. The Contras: Interviews with Anti-Sandinistas (San Franscisco: Synthesis Publications, 1985).

Elkin, J. "Quincentenary: Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism," NACLA Report on the Americas, XXV, 4, 1992.

Elliott, D. and McCrone, D. "Class, culture and morality: a sociological analysis of neo-conservatism," Sociological Review, 35, 3, 1987.

Enrique, M. "We Women Learned What We Were Capable of Doing," in Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution, ed. Marcus, B. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1985).

Estep, J.L. "U.S. Army Special Forces 'A' Team: The Cutting Edge," Asian-Pacific Defense Forum (Fall 1983).

Evans, J.H. and Epstein, J. "Nicaragua's Miskito Move Based on False Allegations," National Catholic Report (24 December 1982).

Facione, P., Scherer, D. and Attig, T. Ethics and Society, 2nd. edn. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1991).

Fagen, R. "Dateline Nicaragua: The End of an Affair," Foreign Policy 36, 1979.

Fanon, F. Black Skin, White Masks, trans. Markmann, C.L. (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1967).

Fanon, F. The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1963).

Farrell, T. Caribbean Contact (Barbados, March 1981).

Farrell, T. Caribbean Contact (Barbados, November 1979).

Floréz-Estrada, M. "Y trajeron la guerra," Pensamiento Propio 4, 35, 1986.

Floyd, T. The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for the Mosquitia (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967).

Foster, J. "Introduction," Monthly Review 44, 3, 1992.

Foucault, M. Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. Smith, S. (New York: Random House/Pantheon [1967] 1972).

Foucault, M. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in The Foucault Reader, ed. Rabinow, P. (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

Fox, W. (ed.) Theoretical Aspects of International Relations (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1959).

Fox, D.T., Esq. and Glennon, M.J. *Abuses Against Civilians by Counterrevolutionaries operating in Nicaragua* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America and International Human Rights Law Group, April, 1985).

Freeland, J. *A Special Place in History: The Atlantic Coast in the Nicaraguan Revolution* (London: Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, 1988).

Freeland, J. "Nationalist Revolution and Ethnic Rights: The Miskitu Indians of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast," *Third World Quarterly* 11, 4, 1989.

Freud, S. *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans., Rivere, J. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1958).

Freud, S. *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. Jones, K. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1939).

Friedrich, C. *Man and his Government: an empirical theory of politics* (New York: McGraw, 1963).

Fromm, E. *Beyond the Chains of Illusions, My Encounter with Marx and Freud* (New York: Pocket Books, 1966).

Frugoni, E. "Socialism Is More than Marxism," in *Marxism in Latin America*, ed. Aguilar, L. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968).

FSLN and the Government for National Reconstruction. "Declaration of Principles," (Managua, August, 1981).

Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, Canadian Edition (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 1974).

Gadamer, H.G. *Truth and Method*, trans. Glyn-Doepel, W. (London: Seabury, [1960], 1975).

Geertz, C. *Works and Lives* (Stanford: Stanford Univesity Press, 1988).

Gilman, C.P. *Herland* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

Gioseffi, D. (ed.) *Women on War: Essential Voices for the Nuclear Age* (Toronto: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1988).

Giovanni, C.D. "U.S. Policy and the Marxist Threat to Central America," *Heritage Foundation Backgrounder* (15 October, 1980).

Goldberg, D.T. (ed.) *Anatomy of Racism* (Minneapolis: University of

Minnesota Press, 1990).

Goldman, E. Anarchism and Other Essays (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, [1911] 1970).

Gordon, E. "History, Identity, Consciousness and Revolution," Ethnic Groups and the Nation State: The Case of the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1987).

Gramsci, A. "Letter to Tatiana," (7 March 1932), trans., Henderson, H. The New Edinburgh Review, "Gramsci II" (1975).

Gramsci, A. Letters from Prison, trans., Lawner, L. (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

Gramsci, A. Selections from the Prison Notebooks, ed. and trans. Hoare, Q. and Nowell, G. (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

Greeman, R. "The French Republic and the Holocaust: French Anti-Semitism, Ethnic Cleansing and the Nation State," Z Magazine, (January 1993).

Green, M. To Err Is Reagan (San Franscisco: Mother Jones magazine, 1987).

Greene, T. Comparative Revolutionary Movements: Search For Theory and Justice, 3rd edn. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990).

Guevara, C. Guerrilla Warfare [(New York: Monthly Review, 1961]; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1969).

Habermas, J. "Modernity versus Postmodernity," New German Critique, 22, 1981.

Habermas, J. Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990).

Habermas, J. The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate, ed. and trans. by Nicholson, S. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989).

Habermas, J. "The Second Life Fiction of the Federal Republic: We Have Become 'Normal' Again," New Left Review 197, 1993.

Habermas, J. Theory of Communicative Action, 2 vols. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

Hakluyt, R. Principles of navigation: Selections (Indianapolis:

Bobbs-Merrill, 1972).

Hakluyt, R. The principal navigations, voyages, traffiques & discoveries of the English nation ([Glasgow, 1903-5], London: George Baker, 1589).

Halcrow, E.M. Canes and Chains: A Study of Sugar and Slavery (London: Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd., 1982).

Hale, C. "Miskitú: Revolution in the Revolution," NACLA Report on the Americas, XXV, 3, 1990.

Hallahmi, B. "The U.S.-Israeli-Central American Connection," The Link 18, 4, 1985.

Halperin, D. and Garfield, R. "Developments in Health Care in Nicaragua," New England Journal of Medicine 307, 1982.

Hammond, J. "Resettlement and Rural Development in Nicaragua," Monthly Review 41, 5, 1989.

Hamshere, C. The British in the Caribbean (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972).

Harkin, T. "Contras or Contadora: Military Solution or Negotiated Political Settlement," (26 March 1985).

Harris, R. and Vilas, C. (eds.) Nicaragua: A Revolution Under Seige (New Jersey: Zed Books, Ltd., 1985).

Hartman, G. "History and Judgment the case of Paul de Man," History and Memory 1, 1 (Spring/Summer, 1989).

Hartsock, N. Money, Sex, Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1983).

Hearings before the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. United States Policy Toward Nicaragua, (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1979).

Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on International Relations. "Human Rights in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Policy," Congressional Records-House, (Washington, D.C., June 8 and 9, 1976).

Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations. Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Year 1979 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Publishing, 1978).

Hegel, G.W.F. Reason in History: A General Introduction to the

Philosophy of History, trans. Hartman, R. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, [1837] 1953).

Hegel, G.W.F. The Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. Miller, A. (Oxford: Clarendon Press [1807], 1977).

Heidegger, M. Basic Writings, (ed.), Krell, D.F. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977).

Heidegger, M. What Is Called Thinking?, trans. Gray, J.G. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

Helms, M. Asang: Adaptations to Culture Contact in a Miskito Community (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1971).

Helms, M. "Matrilocality, Social Solidarity, and Culture Contact," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 26, 1970.

Helms, M. "Miskito Slaving and Culture Contact: Ethnicity and Opportunity in an Expanding Population," Journal of Anthropological Research 39, 2, 1983.

Helms, M. "Miskito Slaving in the 17th and 18th Centruies: Culture, Contact and Ethnicity in an Expanding Population," Paper presented at the 44th International Congress of Americanists. (Manchester, 1982).

Helms, M. "Of Kings and Contexts: Ethnohistorical Interpretations of Miskito Political Structure and Function," American Ethnologist 13, 1986.

Herman, E. and Chomsky, N. Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media (New York: Pantheon, 1988).

Hertsgaard, M. "How Reagan Seduced Us," Village Voice (18 September, 1984).

Hilberg, P. "Bitburg as a Symbol," in Bitburg: Moral and Political Perspective, ed. Hartman, G. (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1986).

Hiro, D. Black British, White British: A History of Race Relations in Britian (London: Paladin, 1991).

Hobbes, T. Elements of Law, Natural and Politic, ed. Toonies, F. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1640] 1928).

Hobbes, T. Leviathan, ed. Macpherson, C.B. (New York: Penguin Books, 1980).

Hodges, D. Intellectual Foundation of the Nicaraguan Revolution (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

Hollis, M. and Lukes, S. Rationality and Relativism (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1982).

Holm, J. "The Creole English of Nicaragua's Miskito Coast: Its Sociolinguistic History and a Comparitive Study of Its Lexicon and Syntax." Ph.D. dissertation, London: University of London, 1978.

hooks, b. Yearning: race, gender and cultural politics (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990).

Howe, I. (ed.) The Basic Writings of Trotsky (New York: International Publishers, 1963).

Howe, I. and Greenberg, E. (eds.) Irving Howe, A Treasury of Yiddish Stories (New York: Schockem Books, 1973).

Hulme, P. Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1797 (New York: Methuen, 1986).

Hume, D. Essays: Moral, Political and Literary (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1963).

Hume, D. "On National Character," in Essays: Moral, Political and Literary (Toronto: Oxford University Press, [1753], 1963).

Hunter, J. Israeli Foreign Policy: South Africa and Central America (Boston: South End Press, 1987).

Hutcheon, L. The Politics of Postmodernism (New York: Routledge, 1989).

Hymans, E. and Ordish, G. The Last of the Incas: The Rise and Fall of An American Empire (New York: Dorset Press, 1963).

International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa and the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, Apartheid: The Facts (London, June 1983).

International Justice Fund, "Report on the Relocation of Miskito Indians by the Nicaraguan Government" (Los Angeles: National Center for Immigrant's Rights, 1984).

Iyer, P. "The Empire Writes Back," Time, (February 1993).

Jacoby, T., Parry, R. and Cliff, E. "Abrams on the Hot Seat," Newsweek (8 June 1987).

Jameson, F. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

Jameson, F. "Marxism and Postmodernism," *New Left Review* 176 (July/August, 1989).

Jameson, F. "Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (July/August, 1984).

Jaspers, K. *Karl Jaspers, Basic Philosophical Writings: Selections*, (ed.) and trans. Ehrlich, E., Ehrlich, L. and Pepper, G.B. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986).

Jaspers, K. *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity*, trans. Wallraff, C.F. and Schmitz, F.J. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965).

Jaspers, K. *The Nature of Psychotherapy: A Critical Appraisal*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964).

Jaspers, K. *Reason and Existenz: Five Lectures*, trans. Earle, W. (New York: The Noonday Press, Inc., 1955).

Jenkins, J. "Exposición del Director General de IRENA en el 1 Seminario Nacional de Recursos Naturales y del Ambiente," in IRENA, *Actas del 11 Seminario Nacional de Recursos naturales y del Ambiente 'Edgar Munguia'* (Managua, 1980).

Jennings, F. *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1976).

Johnson, B. *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980).

Joll, J. *Gramsci* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1977).

Kant, I. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Ellington, J. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981).

Kasinitz, P. "Neo-Marxist Views of the State," *Dissent* 30, 1983.

Katz, W.L. *Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage* (New York: Atheneum, 1986).

Kaufman, E., Shapira, Y. and Barromi, J. *Israeli-Latin American Relations* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1979).

Kautsky, K. *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*, trans.

Askew, J. (Chicago: C.H. Kerr [1907], 1918).

Keohane, N., Rosaldo, M. and Gelpi, B. (eds.) *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

Kierkegaard, S. *Either/Or*, vol. 1, trans. Swenson D.F. and Swenson, L.M. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959).

Kierkegaard, S. *Either/Or*, vol. 2, trans. Lowrie, W. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959).

Kirchhoff, P. "Mesoamerica," *Acta Americana* 1, 1943.

Kirkpatrick, "U.S. Security and Latin America," *Commentary* (January 1981).

Kirkpatrick, J. "A Paranoid Style of Politics," Speech before the United Nations Security Council (25 March, 1982), in Rosset, P. and Vandermeer, J. *The Nicaraguan Reader: Documents of a Revolution Under Fire* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1983).

Klepfisz, I. "Resisting and Surviving America," in *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology*, ed., Beck, E. (Boston: Beacon Press, [1981] 1989).

Koch, N.C. "Special Operation Forces," *Asia-Pacific Defense Forum* (Winter 1983-84).

Koning, H. "Rewriting Our History," *Monthly Review* 44, 3, 1992.

Kornbluh, P. "The Covert War," in *Reagan Versus the Sandinistas: The Undeclared War on Nicaragua* ed. Walker, T. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987).

Kovalenko, I.I. *The Non-Aligned Movement: The Soviet View* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1987).

Kovel, J. "Naming the Conquest," *Monthly Review* 44, 3, 1992.

Kovel, J. *The Age of Desire* (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

Krausz, M. (ed.) *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

Kropotkin, P. "Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles," in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, ed., Baldwin, R. (New York: Dover, 1970).

LaFeber, W. *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central*

America (Toronto: George J. McLeod, 1983).

Laird, L. "Origenes de la reincorporación Nicaraguense de la Costa Atlantica," Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano 140, 1972.

Lakoff, G. "Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf," Linguistics Department, University of California at Berkeley (December, 1990).

Langley, L. Banana Wars: An Inner History of American Empire 1900-1924 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983).

Las Casas, B. "Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies," in History of the Indies, trans. and ed., Collard, A. (New York:Harper and Row, 1971).

Laswell, H. and Kaplan, A. Power and Society: a framework for political inquiry (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950).

Lewis, A. "By Hate Possessed," New York Times (24 March, 1986).

Lelyveld, J. "The Director: Running the C.I.A.," The New York Time Magazine (20 January, 1985).

Lazarus, N. "Doubting the New World Order: Marxism, realism, and the claims of postmodernist social theory," Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies 3, 3, 1991.

Leiken, R. and Rubin, B. (eds.) The Central American Crisis Reader (New York: Summit Books, 1987).

Lemert, C. and Gillan, G. Michel Foucault: Social Theory and Transgression (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

LeMoyne, J. "Exodus of Indians from Nicaragua feared as fighting is reported," New York Times (2 April, 1986).

Lenin, V.I. "State and Revolution," in Social and Political Philosophy, eds. Somerville, J. and Santoni, R. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday [Anchor Books], 1963).

LeoGrande, W. "The Revolution in Nicaragua: Another Cuba?" Foreign Affairs 58, 1, 1979.

Lernoux, P. "Who's Who of Dictators Obtain Arms from Israel," National Catholic Reporter (25 December 1981).

Lernoux, P. "The Indians and the comandantes," The Nation (28

September, 1985).

Litke, R. "Violence and Power," International Social Science Journal, 132, 1992.

Locke, J. The Second Treatise of Government, ed. Peardon, T. (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc., 1952).

London Observer Service. "Israel-Made Weapons Helped Save the Somoza Dynasty," Miami Herald (18 October 1978).

Lorde, A. Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches (Freedom, Cal.: The Crossing Press, 1984).

Lorde, A. The Black Unicorn: Poems (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978).

Lovibond, S. "Feminism and Postmodernism," New Left Review 178, 1989.

Lyotard, Jean-Francois. The Differend: phrases in dispute Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

Lukacs, G. History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics, trans. Livingstone, R. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

Lundestad, G. East, West, North, South: Major Developments in International Politics 1945-1986, trans. Kvam, G. (Toronto: Norwegian University Press, 1986).

Luz, W. Historical Dictionary of the Caribbean (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1975).

Macaulay, N. The Sandino Affair (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1967).

Machiavelli, N. The Prince, trans. and ed. Mosa, M. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964).

MacIntyre, A. Marcuse (London: Fontana/Collins, 1970).

MacKinnon, C. "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory," in Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology, eds., Keohane, N., Rosaldo, M. and Gelpi, B. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

MacLaren, J. and Sugiura, Y. "The Demise of the Fifth Sun," in Viola, H.J. and Margolis, C. Seeds of Change (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1991).

Macpherson, C.B. Democratic Theory: essays in retrieval (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

Magnus, R.W. "The Prehistoric and Modern Subsistence patterns of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua: A Comparison," in Stark, B.L. and Voorhies, B. (eds.) Prehistoric Coastal Adaptations: The Economy and Ecology of Maritime Middle America (New York: Academic Press, 1978).

Maier, C. "Immoral Equivalence," The New Republic (December, 1986).

Mann, B. "The Radical Feminist Task of History: Gathering Intelligence in Nicaragua," Trivia, A Journal of Ideas 9, 1986.

Marcus, G. and Fisher, M. Anthropology as Cultural Critique (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Marcuse, H. Eros and Civilization (Boston: Beacon, 1955).

Marcuse, H. Reason and Revolution (New York: Humanities Press, 1941).

Marshall, J., Scott, P.D., and Hunter, J. The Iran Contra Connection: Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era (Boston, MA.: South End Press, 1987).

Martin, G. "The Immorality of the Contras' Resort to War: The Case of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force," Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, 25, 1988.

Marx, K. and Engels, F. "Manifesto of the Communist Party," Selected Works, 2 vols. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962).

Marx, K. "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," in The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd edn., trans. Rogowski, R., (ed.) Tucker, R. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978).

Marx, K. "On the Jewish Question," in Tuck, R. (ed.) The Marx-Engels Reader (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc, 1978).

Marx, K. "The British Rule in India," in Marx, K. and Engels, F. Selected Works, 2 vols. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962).

Marx, K. "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in Marx, K. and Engels, F. Selected Works, 2 vols. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962).

Marx, K. "Theses on Feuerbach" (Brussels, 1845), in The Marxist Reader, ed. Burns, E. (New York: Avenel Books, 1982).

Mason, J.A. "The Native Languages of Middle America," in The Maya and Their Neighbors (New York: D. Appleton Century, [1940], 1962).

Matson, G.A. and Swanson, J. "Distribution of Hereditary Blood Antigens Among Indians in Middle America: V, in Nicaragua," American Journal of Physical Anthropology 21, 1963.

Mattelart, A. (ed.) "Trabil Nani: Historical Background," Communicating in Popular Nicaragua (New York and Bagnolet, France: International General, 1986).

Mattelart, A. Trabil Nani: History and Current Situation in Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast (Managua, 1984).

Matthews, R. "Franchising Aggression," NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August, 1986).

Matthews, R. "Sowing Dragon's Teeth: The U.S. War Against Nicaragua," NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August, 1986).

Matthews, R. "The CIA War," NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August, 1986).

Matthews, R. "The Reagan Doctrine and Counterrevolution," NACLA Report on the Americas (July/August 1986).

McCann, T. An American Company: The Tragedy of United Fruit (New York: Crown, 1976).

McCarthy, T. "Doing the Right Thing in Cross-cultural Representation," Ethics 102, 1992.

McConnell, J. "How Israel came to deal with the contras," Boston Globe (18 January 1987).

McCuen, Gary E. (ed.) The Nicaraguan Revolution (Hudson, Wis.: Gary E. McCuen Publications, Inc., 1986).

McDonald, Theodore. "The Miskitú Indians." Cultural Survival Quarterly 16 (1980).

McGleary, J. "But Will It Work?," Time (12 March 1990).

McNeill, W. Plagues and People (New York: Doubleday, 1976).

Meldon, J. "The Contra Connection May Go Back as Far as 1979," Boston Globe (30 November 1986).

Melville, M. and Melville, T. Guatemala, The Politics of Land Ownership (New York: Free, 1971).

Meyer, H. Historical Dictionary of Nicaragua (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1972).

Migdail, C. "Nicaragua: Cuba All Over Again," US News and World Report (11 September 1978).

Milam, M. "The Misuse of Nietzsche in Literary Theory," Philosophy and Literature 16, 1992.

Mill, J.S. Dissertations and Discussions, 2 vols. (New York: Haskell [1873], 1972).

Mill, J.S. and Taylor. H. On the Subjection of Women, ed. Susan Moller Okin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988).

Miller, J.H. Victorian Subjects (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

Miller, M. "Indians' Culture Torn by Guatemalan Political Strife," Los Angeles Times (29 November 1985).

Millett, R. The Guardians of the Dynasty: A History of the US-Created Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua and the Somoza Family (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1977).

Milosz, C. Captive Mind (New York: Random House Inc., 1981).

Minh-ha, T. Women, Native Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

Misra, K.P. Nonaligned Movement: India's Chairmanship, 1st edn. (New Delhi, India: Lancers Books, 1987).

Montrose. L. "The work of Gender in the discourse of discovery," Representations 33 (Winter, 1991).

Moore, Sir Thomas. Utopia (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904).

Morgenthau, H. The Politics of Nations (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973).

Mosquito Reservation. Formation of the Municipal Authority for the Government of the Mosquito Reservation (New York: Burr Printing House, 1884).

Moyers, B. "Iran-Contra Scandal," a Frontline documentary produced by the Public Broadcasting Corporation, 1990.

Moyers, B. "The Election held Hostage," a Frontline documentary produced by the Public Broadcasting Corporation, 1991.

Moyers, B. "The Iran-Contra Scandal," a Frontline documentary produced by the Public Broadcasting Corporation, 1990.

Mulligan, J. "Nicaraguan Bishops Continue Opposition Role: Other Catholics Support Sandinista Government," Occasional Paper of the Central American Historical Institute (Managua, March 1986).

Munz, P. "What's Postmodern, Anyway?," Philosophy and Literature 16, 1, 1991.

Murray, R.N. West Indian History (Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1971).

Nairn, A. "Terror with a Human Face," Village Voice (5 November 1985).

National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights," Contra Report, A Bulletin on Human Rights Violations Committed by Counterrevolutionaries (Managua, Nicaragua, 1 September, 1986).

National Public Radio. "All Things Considered," (24 August 1984).

Newson, L. Indian Survival in Colonial Nicaragua (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

Nicholson, L. "Feminism and Marx," in Feminism as Critique, (eds.), Benhabib, S. and Cornell, D. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

Nietschmann, B. "The Indian Resistance in Nicaragua," Akwesasne Notes (Spring 1984).

Nietschmann, B. Between Land and Water: The Subsistence Ecology of the Miskito Indians, Eastern Nicaragua (New York: Seminar Press, 1973).

Nietzsche, F. Beyond Good and Evil, Basic Writings of Nietzsche, trans. Kaufmann, W. (New York: Modern Library, 1968).

Nietzsche, F. "Human all to Human," in The Portable Nietzsche Reader ed. and trans. Kaufmann, W. (Markham, Ontario: Penguin, 1954).

Nietzsche, F. "The Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in his Untimely Meditations, trans., Hollingdale, R.J. (New York:

Cambridge University Press [1874] 1983).

Nietzsche, F. The Will to Power, trans. Kaufmann, W. and Hollingdale, R.J. (New York: Vintage, 1967).

Norris, C. Deconstruction: theory and practice, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 1991).

Norris, C. Derrida (London: Fontana, 1987).

Norris, C. Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals, and the Gulf War (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992).

Norris, C. What's Wrong with Postmodernism: critical theory and the end of philosophy (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990).

Novack, G. Understanding History: Marxist Essays (New York: Pathfinder, 1972).

Noveck, D. "Class, Culture, and the Miskito Indians: A Historical Perspective," Dialectical Anthropology 13, 1, 1988.

Nussbaum, M. The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

O'Neill, O. Constructions of Reason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Okri, B. An African Elegy (London: Johnathan Cape, 1992).

Olien, M. "The Miskito Kings and the Line of Succession," Journal of Anthropological Research 39, 1983.

Ortíz, R. "Indigenous Rights and Regional Autonomy in Revolutionary Nicaragua," Latin American Perspective, 52, 14, 1, 1987.

Ortíz, R. "The Miskitú people, ethnicity and the Atlantic Coast," Nicaraguan Perspectives 3 (1982).

Orwell, G. 1984 (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984).

Osborn, R. Marxism and Psycho-analysis (New York: Dell, 1967).

Osborn, P. "A Marxism for the Postmodern?: Jameson's Adorno," New German Critique 56 (Spring-Summer, 1992).

Otero, C.P. (ed.) Language and Politics (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988).

Outhwaite, W. "Hans-Georg Gadamer," in The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences, ed. Skinner, Q. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Palmer, B. Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

Pastor, R. Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

Pearce, J. Under the Eagle: US Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean (Boston: South End Press, 1982).

Pearsall, M. (ed.) Women and Values: Readings in Recent Feminist Philosophy (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1986).

Peet, R. An Introduction to Marxist Theories of Underdevelopment (Canberra: The Australian University, 1980).

Peinado, J. "Discrediting Nicaragua: The U.S. Takes Aim at Religion," Nicaraguan Perspectives (Winter, 1983).

Peréz-Valle, Eduardo. Expédiente de Campos Azules, Historia de Bluefields en sus documentos (Managua, 1978).

Petras, J. "U.S. Foreign Policy: The Revival of Interventionism," Monthly Review 31, 9 (February 1980).

Pim, C. The Gate of the Pacific (London: Lovell Reed and Co., 1863).

Plano, J. and Olton, R. The International Relations Dictionary, 4th edn. (Santa Barbara, Cal.: ABC-CLIO, 1988).

Plato. The Republic of Plato, trans. Cornford, F. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945).

Rabinbach, A. "German Historians Debate the Nazi Past," Dissent (Spring, 1988).

Randall, M. Sandino's Daughters: Testimonies of Nicaraguan Women in Struggle (ed.) Yanz, L. (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981).

Reagan, R. "U.S. Interests in Central America," in Realism, Strength, Negotiation: Key Foreign Policy Statements of the Reagan Administration, Department of State (Washington, D.C., 1984).

Redding, P. "Nietzschean Perpectivism and the Logic of Practical Reason," The Philosophical Forum, XXII, 1, 1990.

Reuter. "Salvadoran officers jailed in slaying Jesuit priests released," Edmonton Journal (2 April 1993).

Reynolds, E. (ed.) Sir Thomas More (London: Longman's Green, 1975).

Ricoeur, P. Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

Riding, A. "Reporters Notebook: Somoza Fighting On as Aides Panic," The New York Times (28 June 1979).

Ripley, G. and Dana, C. (eds.) The New American Cyclopedia (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1858).

Rivera, B. "Statement on Indian Rights" (April 1982), in Leiken, R. and Rubin, B. (eds.) The Central American Crisis Reader (New York: Summit Books, 1987).

Rivera, B. "Revolution and Justice," in The Nicaraguan Revolution (ed.) McCuen, G. (Hudson, Wis.: Gary McCuen Publications, Inc., 1986).

Robinson, W. and Norsworthy, K. David and Goliath: The U.S. War Against Nicaragua (New York: Monthly Review, 1987).

Robinson, W.I. and Norsworthy, K. "Nicaragua: The Strategy of Counterrevolution," Monthly Review 37, 7 (December 1985).

Rooper, A. Fragile Victory: Nicaraguan Community At War (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987).

Rorty, R. "Deconstruction and Circumvention," Critical Inquiry XI, 1987.

Rossbach, L. and Wünderich, V. "Derechos indigenas y estado nacional en Nicaragua: La Convención Mosquita de 1894," Encuentro 24-25, 1985.

Rosset, P. and Vandermeer (ed.) The Nicaraguan Reader (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1983).

Rubenberg, C. "Israeli foreign policy in Central America," Third World Quarterly (July, 1986).

Said, E. Orientalism (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

Sale, K. The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy (New York: Knopf, 1990).

Sanday, P. Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Sanders, J. Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment (Boston: South End Press, 1983).

Schlafly, P. The Phyllis Schlafly Report (August, 1985).

Schlesinger, S. and Kinzer, S. Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982).

Schneiderman, F. "Bending Swords into Plowshares: An Investigation of the Tensions between Israel and Nicaragua," A Special Report by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (Washington, D.C., 26 November, 1985).

Schrift, A. Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction (New York: Routledge, 1990)

Scott, J. (ed.) The Spanish Conception of International Law and Sanction (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1934).

Scott, P. and Marshall, J. Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies and the CIA in Central America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

Seale, C. Grenada: The Struggle Against Destabilization (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1983).

Secrest, D. and Brunk, G. "Moral Justifications for Resort to War with Nicaragua: The Attitudes of Three American Elite Groups," The Western Political Quarterly, 44, 3, 1991.

Shaffer, R. "Exchange/Encounter Theory and Myths of American," Monthly Review 44, 3, 1992.

Shaull, R. and John, N. Responding to the Cry of the Poor: Nicaragua and the United States (Philadelphia, PA.: American Friends Service Committee, 1986).

Shipler, D. "Israel and the U.S. Stay on Speaking Terms," New York Times (29 December 1985).

Siegman's, H. "Anti-Semitism Should Have No Place in the Nicaraguan Debate," New York Times (18 April 1986).

Sigmund, E. The Ideologies of the Developing Nations, 3rd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1978).

Silverberg, D. "Which priority for Jews: Israel or liberal causes?," Northern California Jewish Bulletin (22 November 1985).

Simon, R.I. "Forms of Insurgency in the Production of Popular Memories: The Columbus Quincentenary and the Pedagogy of Counter-Commemoration," Cultural Studies 7, 1 (January, 1993).

Sklar, H. (ed.) Trilateralism: The Trilateral Commission and Elite Planning for World Management (Boston: South End Press, 1980).

Sklar, H. Reagan, Trilateralism and the Neoliberals: Containment and Intervention in the 1980's (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1986).

Smith, A. The Wealth of Nations (New York: Random House, 1937).

Smith, P. Discerning the Subject (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

Somerville, J. and Santoni, R. (eds.) Social and Political Philosophy (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday [Anchor Books], 1966).

Somoza, A. El verdadero Sandino o el Calvario de Las Segovias' eda. Edicion (Managua: Edit y Lito "San Jose," 1976).

Sorrin, S. "Report from Nicaragua," Reform Judaism (Summer, 1984).

Spanier, J. American Foreign Policy Since World War II, 9th edn. (New York: Holt Reinhart and Winston, 1983).

Stewart, R. "Nietszche's Perspectivism and the Autonomy of the Master Type," Nous 20, 1986.

Stone, R. After the Fire's Gone Out: The Legacy of a Revolution (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1991).

Stout, P.F. Nicaragua: Past, Present and Future (Philadelphia, 1859).

Sudran, D. and Rubin, R. "In defense of Nicaragua--anti-Semitism is not evident," North California Jewish Bulletin (2 August 1985).

Sued-Badillo, J. "Christopher Columbus and the Enslavement of Amerindians in the Caribbean," Monthly Review 44, 3, 1992.

Tannahill, R. Flesh and Blood: A History of the Cannibal Complex (London: Abacus, 1975).

Taylor, D. The Black Caribs of British Honduras (New York: Wenner-Glen Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc., 1951).

Teplitz, B.I. "The Political and Economic Foundation of Modernization in Nicaragua: The Administration of Jose Santos Zelaya 1893-1909." Ph.D. Dissertation, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

Tuer, D. "Fearful Symmetry: Nicaraguan Self-Determination & American Rhetoric," Fuse (June/July, 1990).

The World Almanac and Book of Facts (New York: Newspaper Enterprise Association, 1986).

Thomas, J. "The Creole point of view," Foreign Relations of the U.S. 1895 in von Oertzen, E., Rossbach, L. and Wünderich, V. (eds.) The Nicaraguan Mosquitia in Historical Documents 1844-1927 (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1990).

Thompson, J. "Language and ideology: a framework for analysis," The Sociological Review 35, 3, 1987.

Thompson, J. Studies in the Theory of Ideology (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).

Thoreau, H.D. "Civil Disobedience," in Atkinson, B. (ed.), Walden and Other Writings of Henry David Thoreau (New York: [Random House] Modern Library, 1937).

Thucydides. History, trans. Warner, R. (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, Inc., [1954] 1987).

Tijerino, D. Inside the Nicaraguan Revolution, As told to Randall, M., trans. Randall, E. (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978).

Torgovnick, M. Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

Tower, J., Muskie, E. and Scowcroft, B. The Tower Commission Report (New York: Bantam Books, 1987).

Tucker, R. "Their Wars, Our Choices," New Republic (24 October, 1983).

Tucker, R. "The Purposes of American Power," Foreign Affairs 59, 2 (Winter, 1980/81).

Tucker, R. (ed.) The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978).

United States Code, s. 956. "Conspiracy to injure property of foreign government," (25 June 1948).

United States Code, s. 958. "Commission to serve against friendly nation," (25 June 1948).

United States Code, s. 960. "Expedition against friendly nation," (25 June 1948).

United States State Department. "Documents on the Nicaragua Resistance: Leaders, Military Personnel, and Program," Special Report No. 142 (Washington, D.C., 1986).

Vilas, C. Ethnic Groups and the Nation State (Stockholm: University of Stockholm and CIDCA, 1987).

Vilas, C. State, Class & Ethnicity in Nicaragua: Capitalist Modernization and Revolutionary Change on the Atlantic Coast (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989).

von Oertzen, E., Rossbach, L. and Wünderich, V. (eds.) The Nicaraguan Mosquitia in Historical Documents 1844-1927 (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1990).

Waghelstein, J.D. "Post-Vietnam Counterinsurgency Doctrine," Military Review (May, 1985).

Walker, T. (ed.) Nicaragua Five Years On (New York: Praeger, 1985).

Walker, T. Nicaragua: Land of Sandino, 2nd edn. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986).

Walsh, A., McCabe, B., Rose, K. and Murphy, S. Nicaragua: An Unfinished Canvas (Dublin: Nicaraguan Book Collective, 1988).

Waltz, K. "Political Philosophy and the Study of International Relations," in Theoretical Aspects of International Relations, (ed.), Fox, W.T.R. (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959).

Walzer, M. Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1977).

Wartenberg, T. The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

Washington Office on Latin America, "Who pays the Price? The Cost of War in the Guatemalan Highlands" (Washington, D.C., April 1988).

Weber, H. Nicaragua: The Sandinista Revolution (London: Verso Editions, 1981).

Weisbrot, R. "Dateline Managua: Anti-Semitism or Anti-Climax," *Moment* (October, 1984).

West, C. and hooks, b. *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1991).

West, C. *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought* (New York: Monthly Review, 1991).

West, C. "Ethics and Action in Fredric Jameson's Marxist Hermeneutics," *Postmodernism and Politics* (ed.) Jonathan Arac (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1986).

White, A. *Nietzsche's Labyrinth* (London: Routledge, 1990).

White, S. *Political Theory and Postmodernism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Whitehead, A. *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Macmillan [1925] 1948).

Wickham, H.A. "Notes on a Journey Among the Woolwa and Miskito Indians," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographic Society* 13, 1869.

Wickham, H.A. "Notes on the Soulmoo or Woolwa Indians of Blewfields River, Mosquito Territory," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 24, 1895.

Willet, P. *The Non-Aligned Movement: The Origins of a Third World Alliance* (New York: Nichols Publishing Company, 1978).

Williams, E. *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964).

Williams, E. *The Truth About Columbus* (New York: Random House, 1939).

Williams, P.J. *The Alchemy of Race and Rights: diary of a law professor* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

Williams, W. *America Confronts a Revolutionary World: 1776-1976* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1976).

Wilson, B. (ed.) *Rationality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970).

Wolff, R.P. *In Defense of Anarchism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

Wolin, P. "Introduction," in *New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*, ed. and trans. by Weber, S. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989).

Woodward, B. *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).

Yewell, J., Dodge, C. and De Sirey, J. (eds.) Confronting Columbus (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Inc., 1992).

Yih, K. and Slate, A. "Bilinguismo en la Costa Atlantica: La Zona Especial I," Wani 2-3 (December-May, 1985).

Young, J. Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

Zamora, M. "Abreast of Columbus: gender and discovery," Cultural Critique 17 (Winter, 1990-1).

Ziring, L. The Middle East Political Dictionary (Santa Barbara, Cal.: ABC-CLIO, 1984).

Zwerling, P. and Martin, C. Nicaragua: A New Kind of Revolution (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1985).